

Foreign Military Studies Office

OEWATCH



FOREIGN NEWS & PERSPECTIVES OF THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Special Essay:
Russian President

VLADIMIR PUTIN

ZEALOT, PATRIOT, OR THREAT?

TURKEY

- 3 Turkey's Security Considerations in the anti-ISIS Coalition
- 5 Syrian Refugee Situation Unsustainable for Turkey
- 7 Turkey Unveils its First Combat Helicopters

MIDDLE EAST

- 8 Crackdown Demonstrates Iran's Cyber Capabilities
- 9 Revolutionary Guards Ground Forces Field Test New Weaponry
- 10 Iranian Commanders Are in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine
- 11 Hizbullah and the Lebanese Armed Forces
- 13 Manufacturing Moderation in Syria

AFRICA

- 15 Nigerian Military: Moles and Self-Inflicted Gunshot Wounds Hamper Fight Against Boko Haram
- 16 Some Africans Blame DoD and Western Drug Companies for Ebola
- 17 Ebola Jeopardizes African Peacekeeping Missions
- 18 Nigeria Steps Up Military Cooperation with Russia and China
- 19 Cameroon and Nigeria Conflict over Death of Boko Haram's Imposter-Leader

LATIN AMERICA

- 20 Colombia's Peace Process Spawns Many Doubts
- 22 Climate Change and Latin Defense
- 23 Same Executive in Bolivia
- 24 Venezuela, Military Generals, and the Cartel of the Suns
- 25 Extremist Anarchist Group Conducts Full-Fledged Terrorist Attack in Chile
- 26 Mexican Cartels Use Landing Strips Owned by the Costa Rican Government
- 27 Chinese Demand Fuels Illegal Logging of Protected Wood in Mexico

INDO-PACIFIC ASIA

- 28 India's Satellite Navigation System One Step Closer to Operational
- 29 Economic Changes in India under PM Modi

KOREA

- 32 North Korea's "Alliance" with Russia against Prompt Global Strike

CHINA

- 33 Russia and China: Sanctions Offer Potential for Strategic and Technological Cooperation

CENTRAL ASIA

- 35 Potential Obstacles to More Contractors in Kazakhstan's Armed Forces
- 36 Questioning Russian Security Assistance to Tajikistan
- 37 The Function of Kyrgyzstan's Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Takes Shape
- 38 Kazakhstan Takes Leading Role in SCO post-2014 Security

EUROPE

- 39 Nebulous Swiss Neutrality: Economic Sanctions Then and Now
- 40 Croatia Welcomes US Mediation to Block Russian Influence
- 41 Russia and Serbia: Friends with Stipulations

RUSSIA

- 42 Missions and C2 Structure of New Russian 'Northern' Strategic Command Analyzed
- 44 Russian Strategic Mobility Highlighted in Vostok-2014 Exercises
- 46 SPETSNAZ Selection and Training
- 48 Veracity of Russian Claims to Renew Nuclear Arsenal Questioned
- 50 Russian Reactions to Government Internet Control
- 52 Armenia's Decline and the Role of Russia's Customs Union
- 54 Regional Study Finds Chechnya Peaceful, Predicts Radicalization in Crimea
- 55 Fall Draft Optimism
- 57 The Kremlin's Sixth-Generation Weapons
- 59 Russian Journalists in Ukraine
- 60 Baltic Concerns over Hybrid Warfare
- 63 Alaska No Longer the 49th State?
- 64 An Expensive but Serious Military Effort in the Arctic
- 66 Arctic Naval and Amphibious Exercises
- 67 Continued Efforts to Consolidate the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

SPECIAL ESSAY

- 68 Russian President Vladimir Putin: Zealot, Patriot, Or Threat?

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Turkey's Security Considerations in the anti-ISIS Coalition

16 October 2014

“...It is not enough just to hit ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria. A more comprehensive strategy needs to be in place to bring an end to the 4-year carnage of the Assad regime.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 2 October the Turkish parliament gave the government a one-year mandate to take military action in Iraq and Syria. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss Turkey's position, considerations and security concerns regarding an anti-ISIS strategy. As the passages discuss, Turkey's concerns include an explosion in the number of Syrian refugees (of whom Turkey already hosts around 1.8 million); the absence of a larger strategy against ISIS which addresses the Assad regime; the need to shield Turkey from the instability in Syria; a desire to avoid becoming long-term neighbors with ISIS; and an effort to avoid derailing the delicate peace process with its Kurdish militants.

As the first passage, which features a quote by Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, discusses, Turkey wants safe zones on the Syrian side of the border to decrease the burden of refugees on Turkey. Turkey has repeatedly claimed that the refugee situation that it has been shouldering with little help from the international community is not sustainable for the Turkish population, economy and social fabric, in addition to long-term concerns over their potential radicalization and sectarian violence.

The second passage, penned by Ibrahim Kalin, the chief adviser to the Turkish president, notes that it is not enough to aurally hit ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria, and that there should be a more comprehensive political and military strategy which focuses on ending the Assad regime, which he claims is the root of the problem. Kalin also notes Turkey's demand for a no-fly zone and safe haven, which would help protect Syrian refugees and provide security along the 560-mile long Turkish-Syria border.

As the third passage discusses, the situation in the Kurdish regions of Syria, where ISIS is fighting a Kurdish group called the Democratic Union Party (PYD), an affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), is raising the PKK's public profile and risks sabotaging the delicate peace talks that Turkey has been conducting with the group. Turkey has a long and painful history of fighting the PKK, during which over



Source: <http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber-turkiyenin-suriyede-istedigi-guvenli-bolge-166077/>

Source: “Türkiye’nin istediği güvenli bölge” [The safe-zone that Turkey wants], Taraf, 16 October 2014, <http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber-turkiyenin-suriyede-istedigi-guvenli-bolge-166077/>

“...In an interview that he gave to Al Jazeera, Prime Minister Davutoğlu said: ‘... We have close to 1.8 million refugees. 1.6 million of them escaped from the Syrian regime, and 200,000 escaped from ISIS. So when we look at these numbers, [we see that] even if ISIS was destroyed, the threat facing the Syrian population will still be there. But we can declare such safe zones that the Syrian people can stay within their own lands. Turkey can still meet all of their needs. We have no reservations about that. But from now on, we want our Syrian brothers and sisters to stay within Syrian territory, and build a future within their own lands. We will provide all kinds of help. The buffer-zone that we are talking about is not a military one, it is a humanitarian safe zone, protected by military. The depth of these [zones] can vary in different places.’ ”

Source: Ibrahim Kalin, “Questions about the Anti-ISIS Strategy,” Daily Sabah, 1 October 2014, <http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ibrahim-kalin/2014/10/01/questions-about-the-antiisis-strategy>

“...In Syria, ISIS should not make us lose sight of the root of the problem. It is not ISIS but the Assad regime that has started the bloodiest war of the second decade of the 21st century.... The anti-ISIS strategy will fail without targeting the Assad regime and it may also embolden ISIS and its new recruits... That’s why it is not enough just to hit ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria. A more comprehensive strategy needs to be in place to bring an end to the 4-year carnage of the Assad regime. Organizations such as al-Qaida, ISIS and others thrive in such chaotic environments.

(continued)

Continued: Turkey's Security Considerations in the anti-ISIS Coalition

40,000 lives were lost over 28 years. Turkey and the PKK recently entered peace talks, but the relationship remains precarious. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

...Turkey's demands for a no-fly zone and a safe haven for Syrian refugees should be seen as part of this broader strategy. Turkey has been weathering the waves of refugees for the last three years, but given the deteriorating security situation in Syria and the increasing number of refugees fleeing to Turkey, a no-fly zone... can protect and save Syrian lives. This is also important for beefing up security on the 911-kilometer long Turkish-Syrian border."

Source: Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "İŞİD çözüm sürecini sabote ediyor" [ISIS is sabotaging the solution process], Milliyet.com.tr, 25 September 2014, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/isid-cozum-surecini-sabote-ediyor/siyaset/ydetay/1945314/default.htm>

"ISIS has up-ended regional balances and is also creating a new situation which makes the peace process difficult. Let me explain:

For the PKK movement, Rojava [the Kurdish part of Syria] is an important political and geographic win. Despite its reluctance, Ankara has not said much about the Democratic Union Party (PYD) trying to establish 'democratic autonomy' in that region. But when the ISIS attacks started, it didn't want to take either side... The Kurdish movement is throwing all its energy behind Rojava. And Ankara's silence is being perceived as 'indirect support' to ISIS.

...It has not escaped the international public's attention that the PKK has been challenging ISIS—the world's number one problem—in northern Iraq and Syria. What's more, the PKK has gained the media's sympathy. While Turkey's position has been partially weakened, the PKK is aware that it has opened up a new strategic area for itself in the eyes of the West. This situation will make the [PKK] more demanding in the negotiation process."



Turkey's Role in Afghanistan and Afghan Stabilization

By Karen Kaya

Turkey views its presence in Afghanistan not only as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission, but also as a "brotherhood duty" to help the Afghan people restore peace. Turkey's views towards Afghanistan are also based on its own strategic interests: as long as Afghanistan is unstable, the whole region will be unstable, posing a security threat to Turkey. When Afghanistan becomes a secure and stable country, this will introduce wider stability in the region, bringing new economic benefits for the region in general and for Turkey in particular.

http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20140831_art007.pdf



Syrian Refugee Situation Unsustainable for Turkey

16 October 2014

“The Turkish government so far spent more than \$4 billion for the survival and settlement of Syrian refugees, whose numbers have neared 2 million.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since ISIS started attacking the northern Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane in September, the number of Syrian refugees coming to seek shelter in Turkey has exploded. In less than three weeks over 183,000 people from Kobane have sought refuge in Turkey, bringing the total number of refugees in the country to approximately 1.8 million. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss the unsustainability of this situation for Turkey.

The first accompanying passage notes that the Turkish government has spent almost \$4 billion for the survival and settlement of Syrian refugees. In contrast, according to Turkish think-tank reports, Turkey has reportedly only received \$200 million in international aid for the refugees. Turkey's open-door policy has saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, but, as the passages claim, the situation is not sustainable. In the second accompanying passage the foreign minister calls on the international community to share this burden.

In the third passage Turkey's UNHCR representative Carol Batchelor points out that, since ISIS entered Kobane in northern Syria, the number of Syrian refugees seeking shelter in Turkey has increased at an unprecedented level. As the first passage notes, an important consideration is that most of these refugees will not go back to Syria in the near- or even mid-term and will have to be integrated

Source: Kılıç Buğra Kanat, “The Sustainability of Turkey's Refugee Burden,” Daily Sabah, 16 October 2014, <http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/kilic-bugra-kanat/2014/10/16/sustainability-of-the-turkeys-refugee-burden>

“The Turkish government so far spent more than \$4 billion for the survival and settlement of Syrian refugees, whose numbers have neared 2 million. With the recent influx of refugees from Kobane, the economic cost also started to increase rapidly. In the long run, with the possibility of a further flow of people from the border and the declining possibility of these refugees to return to Syria any time soon, the situation may not be sustainable for Turkey or any other country in the region to handle the situation by their own capabilities and resources. Despite the exemplary work of the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority and other humanitarian organizations along with sacrifices by the local people and authorities, the cost may be more than Turkey can endure.”

Source: “Çavuşoğlu'ndan Suriyeli sığınmacılar için çağrı (Çavuşoğlu's call for Syrian refugees),” Al Jazeera Turk, 14 October 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/cavusoglundan-suriyeli-siginmacilar-icin-cagri>

“...[Foreign Minister] Çavuşoğlu, who reminded that there are over 1.5 million refugees in Turkey, said that 220,000 Syrians also live near the border: ‘This enormous humanitarian tragedy and the current situation is not sustainable for Turkey. The effects of this are being felt not only in Turkey but in the entire region. The international community should share this burden and fulfill its obligations according to the international humanitarian laws.’ ”

Source: “Türkiye’deki Suriyeli mültecilerin sayısı açıklandı (The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey declared),” Sözcü.com.tr, 22 September 2014, <http://sozcu.com.tr/2014/gundem/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-multecilerin-sayisi-aciklandi-606600/>

“The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees declared that over 100,000 people escaping from ISIS terror from the Kobane region on northern Syria, on the border with Turkey, have entered Turkey... The UNHCR Turkey Representative Carol Batchelor said that the Syrian refugees in Turkey have increased in an unprecedented ratio, claiming that, ‘In the last 3,5 years we had not witnessed 100,000 people flowing to the border within two days and enter Turkey.’ The UN representative, who said that the number of refugees in Turkey have approached 1.6 million, also said that it was unknown how high this number would go.”

(continued)

Continued: Syrian Refugee Situation Unsustainable for Turkey

into Turkish society. The rapid influx of refugees and their long-term stay put pressure on local infrastructures and create social tensions. An earlier report by the International Crisis Group had also echoed this view and had called on the wider international community to share more of the growing burden, calling attention to the high cost of building and maintaining shelters and providing medical, social, educational and language support to the new communities.

This is also an important factor in explaining Ankara's call for safe-havens in Syria (see previous article). Ankara believes that such safe havens would help address this problem by facilitating the transfer of some of the refugees back to Syria. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Turkey and China: Unlikely Strategic Partners

By Ms. Karen Kaya

In late September-early October 2010 Turkey and China held a bilateral military exercise in Turkey, the first such exercise that China conducted with a NATO member. This, coupled with the numerous high-level diplomatic and military visits between the two countries since 2009, has led to talk of a new “strategic partnership” between Turkey and China. While it is debatable whether the two countries are really at the level of a strategic partnership, the burgeoning Sino-Turkish relationship, which has remained unconsidered and understudied, is worth examining in order to assess the implications it may have for the US and its defense community. This article analyzes the Turkey-China relationship in light of their strategic interests and discusses why it is unlikely that they will become true strategic partners, given the wide divergence between these interests.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Turkey-and-China.pdf>



Turkey Unveils its First Combat Helicopters

17 October 2014

“The ATAK- T-129, the first attack and tactical reconnaissance helicopter produced by Turkey were delivered to the Turkish Land Forces...”

OE Watch Commentary: On 16 October the Turkish Armed Forces announced that the first five attack and tactical reconnaissance helicopters, produced by Turkey, had been added to its arsenal. Another four are planned to be added in the coming weeks. The accompanying passages from the Turkish press discuss the technology, engineering and manufacturing details of this important development for the Turkish defense industry.

As the passages discuss, the T-129 ATAK was produced using the newest technology in the aerospace sector, and is able to successfully conduct maneuvers that are normally very difficult. In addition, according to the passages, the helicopter features an advanced weapons and control system, produced entirely by domestic means. The passages point out that the ATAK's weapons include the laser-guided Cirit missile, produced in Turkey and in demand by many countries, along with the Hellfire antitank missile, which attracts attention due to its long range.

This project had been underway since late 2007, and comes within the broader context of Turkey's effort to reduce dependence on foreign weapons and become more self-sufficient and more competitive in the defense industry. To this end, the Turkish undersecretary for the defense industry has been promoting strategies that would allow Turkey to design and develop its own weapons. These domestic weapons are meant to be up to international standards and are focused solely on fulfilling the needs of the Turkish Army, Navy and Air Force. The goal of becoming more self-sufficient in this field is meant to reduce dependence on foreign companies. In addition to serving the Turkish Armed Forces, the goal is also to create more opportunities for export and to transfer technology. With such initiatives, Turkey hopes to join the ranks of the top ten countries in the world in the defense industry. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kaya)**

Source: “İlk 5 ATAK helikopteri ve pilotları ‘harbe’ hazır [The first 5 ATAK helicopters and pilots are ready for ‘combat’],” Zaman.com.tr, 17 October 2014, http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_ilk-5-atak-helikopteri-ve-pilotlari-harbe-hazir_2251283.html

“The first 5 ATAK Helicopters, produced within the national combat helicopters project, has been delivered to the Turkish Armed Forces. The General Staff presented the T-129 helicopters to the public at the Land Forces Command in Ankara. The T-129 ATAK, which was produced using the newest technology in the aerospace sector, impressed viewers by successfully completing maneuvers that are very difficult to conduct for other helicopters in its class.

The helicopter attracts attention due to its weapons and force control system, produced entirely by national means. ATAK's weapons include the laser-guided ‘Cirit’ missile produced in Turkey and in demand by many countries; along with the Hellfire antitank missile, which attracts attention due to its long range.”

Source: “ATAK, Turkey's first combat helicopters ready for mission,” Cihan.com.tr, 17 October 2014, http://en.cihan.com.tr/news/ATAK-Turkey-s-first-combat-helicopters-ready-for-mission_8078-CHMTU1ODA3OC80

“The ATAK- T-129, the first attack and tactical reconnaissance helicopter produced by Turkey were delivered to the Turkish Land Forces after training of the flight personnel. ...

The helicopter was developed as a part of the ATAK project, which has been under way since late 2007. Following a contract with a total value of \$3 billion signed with Finmeccanica's AgustaWestland, an Italian defense electronics group, Turkey started studies for the production of ATAK helicopters.

Turkish engineers added some extra parts, including avionics and heavy armor to the first model developed as a part of the ATAK helicopter project. Turkey's first nationally developed laser guided missiles code-name Cirit (Jereed) and Hydra rockets can be launched by the ATAK T-129. The T-129 is also able to carry Hellfire antitank missiles and launch anti-aircraft Stinger missiles.”



Crackdown Demonstrates Iran's Cyber Capabilities

13 September 2014

“Thanks to the measures taken by cyber monitoring police...we have found new clues about the elements who made insulting comments....”

OE Watch Commentary: On September 13 Hossein Ashtari, acting chief of Iran's national police force, announced that Iran's cyber police had identified those circulating jokes on Viber, an instant messaging and voice-over IP application designed for smart phones. The jokes reportedly made fun of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the late follower of the Islamic Republic, as well as other senior regime officials.

The announcement highlights Iran's growing capacity to monitor not only emails and cell phones, but also instant messaging and other social media. This, in turn, suggests that the Islamic Republic is determined not to allow social media to be used as a means to organize opposition against the regime, as youth in Arab countries had done during the Arab Spring uprisings. Subsequent to the announcement cited in the excerpted article, the judiciary also accused Iranians of using WhatsApp, Tango, and Facebook to ridicule regime leadership.

While Ashtari's remarks reflect the degree to which social media have permeated the Islamic Republic's sometimes cloistered society, the announcement creates a chill over communications not seen since the regime demonstrated its ability to monitor short message service (SMS) messaging during the 2009 post-election protests. (In that instance, Iranians blamed German and Scandinavian companies for having sold Tehran monitoring technology.)

While almost all Iranians acknowledge the circulation of the jokes, ordinary Iranians question whether hardliners might have circulated the jokes themselves in order to provide a reason to crackdown on Iran's burgeoning social networks and undercut efforts to ease restrictions upon the internet inside Iran. One thing is clear: while the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and leadership officials often brag about the regime's cyber capabilities, these are not simply directed at hacking Iranian adversaries abroad, but are increasingly monitoring and targeting Iranian internet and communications technology use at home. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Photo: Abolfazl Salmanzadeh

MEHR NEWS AGENCY

Commander Hossein Ashtari (right) at the opening of an Iranian police station.

Source: “Sarnakhha-ye Jadid az ‘Avamel Tawheen beh Moqadasat dar Vayber’ (New Clues About Viber Blasphemy), Mehr News Agency, 13 September 2014. <http://www.mehrnews.com/detail/News/2369310>

New Clues about Viber Blasphemy

The acting chief of the national police said: “We have found new clues about those who made insulting comments against His Excellency the Imam [Khomeini] and sanctities in the Viber social network, and if the judiciary approves, we will expose these individuals to the public.”

According to a report from the Mehr News correspondent, Commander Hossein Ashtari on Sunday stated to a gathering of reporters, “Thanks to the measures taken by FETA [cyber monitoring] police and the cooperation of other security forces, we have found new clues about the elements who made insulting comments against officials and sanctities in Viber which can be presented to the people if the judiciary consents.”

Revolutionary Guards Ground Forces Field Test New Weaponry

28 September 2014

“The Ramiat Project...is a roadside mine that has high accuracy, can be remotely detonated, and has a large blast radius”

OE Watch Commentary: In both Iraq and Afghanistan, US forces have faced insurgents and terrorists armed with Iranian weaponry. If comments cited in this excerpt by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour are accurate, US forces in the region could soon face even more sophisticated weaponry. Pakpour announced that the IRGC has successfully field-tested a new roadside, remote-controlled mine designed to destroy armored vehicles, and that it has also upgraded its sniper rifles. At the same time, Iranian efforts to develop a new, rapid-fire gun to down cruise missiles probably reflects the IRGC's sense of Iran's own vulnerabilities and its expectations of the mechanism by which the United States, Israel, or other powers might attack Iran.

While the United States, Europe, and moderate Arab regimes most often focus on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, Pakpour's comments suggest the Islamic Republic remains as committed to upgrading both its offensive and defensive systems and arsenals. In this case, however, the new weaponry announced could prove especially troublesome because of the ease by which they could be transferred to terrorists fighting against moderate Arab regimes or in areas where the United States operates directly. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Source: <http://www.defapress.ir/Fa/News/29804>

Source: “Zamayesh Maydani Taslihat-e Jadid Niruye Zamini Sepah” (Revolutionary Guards Ground Forces Field Test New Weaponry), Defahpress.ir, 28 September 2014. <http://www.defapress.ir/Fa/News/29804>

Revolutionary Guards Ground Forces Field Test New Weaponry

According to a report from the Defense Press defense and security correspondent, [citing Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour], one of the new weapons is the “Asifeh,” a rotating, three-cylinder cannon that fires 900 23-caliber rounds per minute that can target cruise missiles and other objects flying at low altitude. After testing, this weapon will be delivered to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces.

The Ramiat Project was also successfully tested today. This project is a roadside mine that has high accuracy, can be remotely detonated, and has a large blast radius.

The report also said that the Fateh rifle was tested. This sniper rifle fires 5.56mm rounds, the same caliber as NATO.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces said that after testing, these weapons are ready to be incorporated into the armed forces of the Islamic Republic.

Iranian Commanders Are in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine

29 September 2014

“Our commanders are in the field to give military advice to the Iraqi army, Lebanon’s Hezbollah and the Palestinian resistance movement.”

OE Watch Commentary: In 2008 Former President Mohammad Khatami suggested that the constitutional call to export Iran’s Islamic Revolution was meant to imply both use of soft-power and the transformation of the Islamic Republic into a model all neighboring states would want to emulate. Ayatollah Shahroudi, who often echoes the line of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, replied with derision, telling a gathering of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that they were the vanguard of the export of revolution. Alas, Shahroudi’s incitement was not mere rhetoric. In an uncharacteristically bold statement excerpted here, senior Iranian military chief Major General Gholam Ali Rashid has declared outright that the Iranian Army now has trainers operating on the ground not only in Iraq and Syria, but also “in Palestine,” presumably among Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), both of which groups the US government classifies to be terrorist organizations.

That the Iranian military is training the Iraqi Army suggests that Iran will not hesitate to fill any vacuum or seize any opportunity offered by the withdrawal of US forces from the region. Iranian leaders clearly see themselves in a proxy war with the United States. At the same time, while there has been some discussion in the United States about what the Iraqi Army’s poor showing against the Islamic State means for US training programs, the fact that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki had assumed greater personal control of the Iraqi Army and privileged pro-Iranian political loyalists suggests that much blame for the poor state of the Iraqi Army could just as easily reside with the Iranian commissars and trainers who sought to fill the role left by the departure of US forces in 2011.

The admission that Iran operates directly in the Gaza Strip is also important. It raises the stakes considerably, as it will link any act of Palestinian terror more directly to the Iranian regime. While Israelis have always suspected Tehran’s instigation of terror, the fact that “Palestinian resistance groups” like Hamas and PIJ have also targeted Americans suggests that terrorism in the region could quickly undercut any US-Iran rapprochement. **End OE Watch Commentary (Rubin)**



Commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari. Source: www.timesofisrael.com

Source: “Farmandahan-e Irani dar Iraq, Lubnan, va Filistin Komak Mostshari Midahid” (Iranian Commanders are in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine to Help Advise), Fars News Agency, 29 September 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13930705000385>

Rashid: “We Will Help Advise Regional Resistance and Hezbollah”

According to a report from the Fars News defense correspondent, Major General Gholam Ali Rashid, deputy chief of staff of the Armed Forces, this morning speaking to battalion commanders at a commemoration the Holy Defense [Iran-Iraq War] in the Milad Tower conference center, said that this war against us was not a local war, but this war was more important than the Vietnam War and Arab-Israeli wars, and he said, “The eight-years Holy Defense was a world war, and our veterans broke Saddam’s attempts to impose a regional and global agenda.

He said, “The situation in Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon... shows that there must be more intellectual and structural cohesion than before. Otherwise [the enemy] imposes a strategy of divide and conquer.”

Rashid said, “Some of our commanders are today in Iraq, with Lebanese Hezbollah and the Palestinian resistance movement to advise.”

Hizbullah and the Lebanese Armed Forces

16 October 2014

“... Why would we want to fight to defend American interests? ...”

الصفحة الرسمية لقائد الجيش اللبناني

Jean Kawhaji, head of Lebanon's Armed Forces (Official Facebook Page photo):
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/35972735217/photos/a.10150922952550218.460283.35972735217/10152522411490218/?type=1&theater>

OE Watch Commentary: Is Lebanon part of the anti-Islamic State (IS) coalition? A 26 September piece in the Al-Arabi al-Jadid newspaper, excerpted alongside this commentary, argues that the answer is both yes and no. This is because Lebanon is following “the Turkish model,” under which domestic conditions make overtly joining the coalition impossible and regional alliances make rebuffing it untenable. In a 23 September televised speech, Hizbullah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah laid out the case against the coalition. He listed several reasons why he believes the US is not a credible leader of a military intervention to fight terrorism in the Middle East. The second accompanying excerpt lists the top five reasons he mentioned.

Tensions are high between Hizbullah and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), on the one hand, and jihadis affiliated with the IS and Nusra Front (NF), on the other. The jihadis are ensconced in the barren mountains between Lebanon and Syria, near the flashpoint town of Arsal (Ersal) and bordering Hizbullah strongholds. They have held more than twenty Lebanese military and security personnel hostage for several weeks and have already executed three of them (two were beheaded by IS, one shot by NF). Negotiations have failed, and pressure on the state to find a solution will likely continue growing.

The approach of cold weather and snow conspires against the jihadis. Many believe that this consideration was largely behind a 5 October NF incursion into Hizbullah territory not far from the town of Baalbek, in the Bekaa Valley. NF

Source:

لندن تخشى تحوّل لبنان ممراً لمتفجرات “القاعدة”
Thair Ghandour. “London Fears Lebanon Turning into a Transit Route for al-Qaeda’s Explosives,” 26 September 2014. <http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/58eb5495-d26d-4da6-bda9-a74cf0577bb0>

Has Lebanon joined the coalition against the Islamic State or not? It is impossible to get an official response on this from Lebanese authorities. Their behavior says no. According to an official Lebanese source that spoke to al-Arabi al-Jadid, Lebanese authorities told their American and European counterparts that “we cannot join this alliance overtly due to the domestic situation and the fact that the IS and Jabhat al-Nusra hold tens of Lebanese hostage.” He also insisted that Lebanon cannot oppose the coalition, especially since Saudi Arabia is a part of it and also given the Gulf consensus about it and the international cover. Consequently, “the relationship with the alliance follows the Turkish model.”

Source:

كلمة السيد حسن نصر الله عبر شاشة المنار 23-9-2014
“Speech by Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah on al-Manar TV, 9/23/2014,” 23 September 2014. <http://www.mediarelations-lb.org/article.php?id=13244&cid=94>

First, because from our perspective America is the mother of terrorism... if you find terrorism in this world look for the American administration; of course we are not speaking of the American people... Second, because America unconditionally supports the Zionist terrorist state... Third, America created or helped create this takfiri terrorist movement... Fourth, America is not morally fit to lead a coalition to fight terrorism... Fifth, this coalition, as Obama has repeatedly said, is to defend American interests. Why would we want to fight to defend American interests? Especially since most if not all of these interests come at the expense of the people and governments of the region.

(continued)

Continued: Hizbullah and the Lebanese Armed Forces

fighters briefly held Hizbullah checkpoints and killed a handful of the party's fighters. The attack, some believe, aimed at drawing both Hizbullah and the LAF into battle with the jihadis before the bitter cold sets in.

For several years Lebanon's jihadis have claimed that Hizbullah has co-opted the LAF. On 16 October the NF's media network released a video featuring a defected Lebanese soldier by the name of Abdullah Shehada. In the nearly 25-minute video, Shehada repeatedly claims that Hizbullah has co-opted the LAF and encourages other soldiers to defect for this reason. He also expressed his eagerness to go to war with Hizbullah.

Jihadis are not the only ones worried about the convergence of Hizbullah and LAF interests. The third accompanying article, from the Jerusalem Post, notes that some in Israel are concerned about a joint LAF-Hizbullah operation against Israel. On 30 September the struggle for sway within the LAF went international, when Ali Shamkhani, Iran's Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, publicly offered Iranian military assistance to Lebanon's military while on a visit to Lebanon. According to the fourth accompanying article, from Lebanon's al-Akhbar, American authorities have threatened to cut aid to the LAF if the Iranian offer is accepted. In response, Iranian authorities have presented the Lebanese with a list of the equipment that would be included in their offer, which is excerpted alongside this commentary. The Iranian move comes at a time when the LAF have yet to receive the \$3 billion worth of French equipment that the Saudi royal family promised to buy for them in December 2013.

End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)



Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary and former Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani

Source: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/shamkhani-to-head-iran-national-security-council.html#ixzz3GuNp1Jx1>

Source: "Report: Concerns Mount that Hezbollah, Lebanese Army Could Cooperate against Israel," 6 October 2014. Jerusalem Post. <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Report-Concerns-mount-that-Hezbollah-Lebanese-army-could-cooperate-against-Israel-378138>

... concerns are mounting among the defense establishment over the possibility of the Lebanese army and Hezbollah operatives cooperating against Israel, Channel 10 reported Monday.

Source:

واشنطن تهدد: السلاح الإيراني ممنوع

"Washington Warns: Iranian Weapons are Forbidden," 10 October 2014. <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/217330>

Al-Akhbar learned that in response to the "American Red Lines" on arming the Lebanese military, Iran sent a letter about its weapons grant to the foreign ministry, which was then forwarded to the presidency and the defense ministry. The letter said that Iran was ready to provide several TOW missiles and launchers, night-vision goggles, 60- and 120-mm mortars, rounds for T-55 and T-62 tanks, 155-mm ammunition, and Dushka heavy machine-guns. This offer is based on the information Iran has on the needs of the Lebanese Army in its fight against terrorist in Aarsal.

Manufacturing Moderation in Syria

12 October 2014

“... *Opposition fighters are not moderate ...*”

OE Watch Commentary: The term “moderate Syrian opposition” is a loose one. Those who accept the concept agree that neither the Islamic State (IS) nor supporters of the Syrian government fall into the category. Anyone between these two poles may, depending on one’s point of view. When US airstrikes hit a network affiliated with the Nusra Front in Idlib Province, for instance, many in the region decried the fact that the Americans were killing the very moderates they aimed to partner with. One person’s moderate fighters are another one’s killers and thugs, as the first accompanying article, from a Hizbullah-linked news website, proposes.

The debate over what constitutes a moderate is being taken seriously in the region, as demonstrated by the second accompanying article, an opinion piece published in the prominent Saudi daily al-Hayat. The author distinguishes between encouraging moderates and manufacturing them, arguing that by seeking to manufacture moderates American policy in Syria will weaken those groups in which moderation may be encouraged. This will, in turn, strengthen both the Syrian government and the Islamic State. The author notes that manufacturing moderation for the sole purpose of waging war against IS and al-Qaeda does not provide a sufficient political or moral incentive for moderation.

What about the “Waitasemo” Initiative and the accompanying Revolutionary Command Council (RCC)? The RCC is a non-ideological coalition that includes several of what are considered the less extreme Islamist groups, as well as major factions associated with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) banner. After first being launched in early August 2014, this initiative appears to have at least maintained its inertia. In early October signatories agreed on a covenant, echoing the Islamic Front’s “Honor Pact.” The Syrian Islamic Council, a Turkey-based coalition representing influential non-jihadi Sunni voices, endorsed the initiative. The third accompanying excerpt is a 12 October post on the group’s Facebook page, in which it claims to now consist of over 100 factions. As has been the case with other self-proclaimed moderates throughout the Syrian conflict, the question of how much influence these groups actually have on the ground is crucial, yet very difficult to answer.

The formation and dissolution of grand alliances and coalitions has been a constant with rebel groups seeking to curry foreign favor.

Source:

بالتفاصيل: هذه هي فصائل «المعارضة المعتدلة» التي ستدربها واشنطن!
 “In Detail: These are the ‘Moderate Opposition’ Groups Washington Wants to Train!”
 21 September 2014. Al-Hadath News. <http://www.alhadathnews.net/archives/136725>

The “Ajnad al-Sham Islamic Union” is the most famous group for Damascenes, who are reminded of the group daily through the tens of mortars and Katyusha rockets that have killed hundreds of civilians... Also to be trained is the “Syrian Revolutionaries Front”... which is known for robbing hundreds of homes, stores and factories and for controlling the market for fuel coming from Syria’s east. Its leader Jamal Maarouf and his group are thus the most important indirect funder of ISIL since they sell their oil and smuggle it both in and outside of Syria...

Source:

لكن حقا: من هي المعارضة السورية المعتدلة؟
 Omar Kaddour. “Is There a Moderate Syrian Opposition?” 21 September 2014.
 al-Hayat. <http://goo.gl/tqd5f5> (translation via: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/09/syria-moderates-extremists-united-states-strikes.html>)

There is a necessary distinction here between the apparent manufacture of moderation and its encouragement. The former, which is touted by the American strategy against the Islamic State (IS), is comprised of training thousands of new soldiers for the mission. In all honesty, this implies a lack of faith in current fighters and could lead those fighters to be deprived of the support necessary to hold their own against regime forces. Moreover, it could allow the regime to gain control over wide swathes of territory... Opposition fighters are not moderate. By the same standards, they are not extremists, and it must be noted that the standard used to distinguish between them is Islamic in the first place...

Source: 12 October 2014. Waitasemo Initiative Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/waitasemo/posts/1488691841383408>

After around 100 groups have signed the pact and joined the Revolutionary Command Council and the effective formation throughout Syrian territory, the Preparatory Commission for the Revolutionary Command Council has decreed:

1. To accept all the applications to join the council by factions present on the ground.
2. Send the Revolutionary Command Council all request for joining that are made after the initiative was announced, which is to say after 4 October 2014, so that the council may decide.

Continued: Manufacturing Moderation in Syria

Effective use of social media by these groups often means that they present themselves as much stronger than they truly are. Keeping track of the hundreds of potentially moderate groups and their shifting alliances can seem a fool's errand. Take for instance the recent takeover of Tel Harra, a strategic high point in Quneitra Province housing an important Syrian government SIGINT base. Who took it over? Some headlines credited the FSA with the takeover, others claimed it was the Islamists. What is known is that the operation was part of a battle called the "Dawn and Ten Nights," which was launched on 4 October. In addition to the Nusra Front, eight separate "operations rooms" participated, as detailed in the fourth accompanying excerpt. Many of the "operations rooms" were composed of several groups and coalitions of varying shades of moderation.

End OE Watch Commentary (Winter)

Source:

ملخص الظهيرة – معركة والفجر وليال عشر
 "Midday Update: Dawn and Ten Nights Battle" 4 October 2014. Al-Furqan Brigades Website. <http://alfurq4n.org/archives/1832>

Thanks to God and to the efforts and unity of the mujahideen in Quneitra and Daraa, today we launch the Battle of Dawn and Ten Nights targeting:

- Tel al-Harra, al-Assad's strongest fortification in the south, and the towns of Zamrin and Sulayman in the Daraa countryside.
- Tel Krum, Tel Bozak and the town of Jabbain Quneitra.

The participating military operations rooms are:

Fajr al-Tawhid, al-Fatihin, al-Fatih al-Mubin, Fatih al-Sham, al-Tawhid, Jabhat al-Nusra, Sajil, al-Muthana, al-Yarmouk...



The Waitasemo initiative logo. Source: https://www.facebook.com/waitasemo/photos_stream

Nigerian Military: Moles and Self-Inflicted Gunshot Wounds Hamper Fight Against Boko Haram

OE Watch Commentary: *The international spotlight has shone brightly on the Nigerian military since 276 girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram from a school in Chibok. Despite several initial missteps, there were expectations, or at least hopes, that the Nigerian Armed Forces would reform, regroup and successfully pursue the captors and free the captives. Unfortunately, as the accompanying article points out, the Nigerian military at this critical time continues to be plagued with difficulties, including moles leaking sensitive information and soldiers unwilling to fight.*

To be sure, there are many brave and dedicated Nigerian soldiers anxious to engage Boko Haram and liberate the Chibok girls, as these kidnapped schoolchildren have come to be known. Still, the negative press out of Africa regarding these forces continues to flow, with the latest revelations piling on an already demoralized force.

According to the article, the moles who sent military information to Boko Haram were mostly orderlies or aides-de-camp for commanders and information leaked by these individuals resulted in an ambush of the 101st Battalion in April 2014. So many soldiers died that some of the remaining forces mutinied and at one point tried to kill their commanding officer; fortunately for him, he was in an armored car at the time.

Equally disturbing are reports of six officers, tasked with flushing Boko Haram from an area known as the Adamawa axis, who shot themselves and then claimed their injuries were from terrorist gunfire. Medical examinations revealed bullet trajectories that always missed bones, arteries, and similar structures, which, if hit, would have caused significant permanent damage.

*Already falling into disrepute, as reported previously within these pages, because of an abysmal human rights record, the Nigerian military has perhaps shown itself if not capable of reform, then at least struggling to do so. With the Nigerian people depending on it to free the Chibok girls and restore order in the restive north, these recent press reports of soldiers shooting themselves to avoid combat and moles leaking information give the Nigerian people and, indeed, the world pause regarding the Nigerian military's ability to transform itself into a stronger, more disciplined fighting force. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)***

Source: "Military Arrests Soldiers for Being 'Moles' for Boko Haram," Vanguard (Nigeria), 13 Oct 2014, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/10/military-arrests-soldiers-moles-boko-haram/>

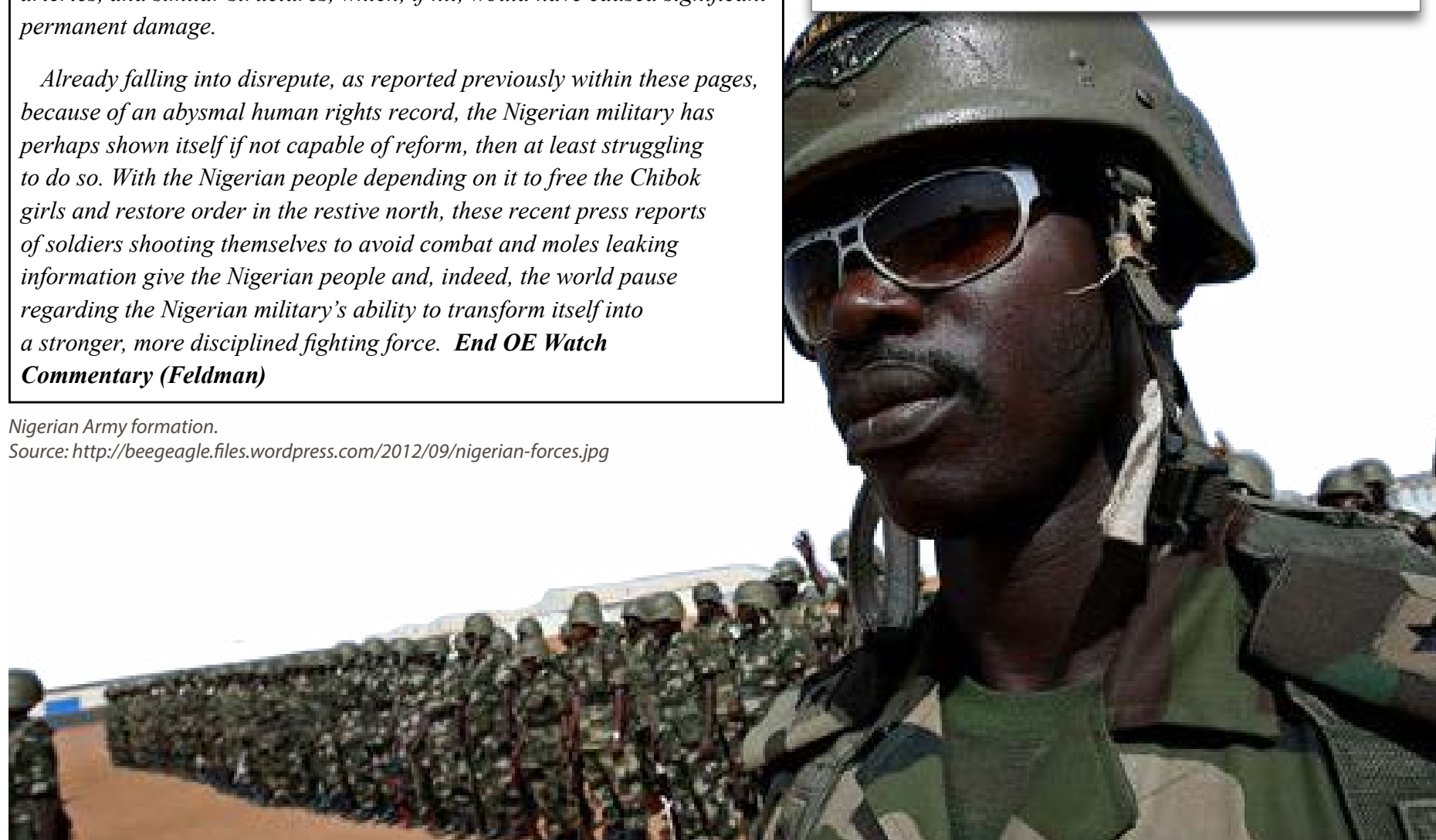
Military authorities prosecuting the war against terrorism in the North East states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe have arrested several soldiers, who were discovered to have leaked vital security information on the troops' strategies and tactics to Boko Haram...

Most of the arrested soldiers serve as orderlies or aide-de-camps, ADCs to Commanders of Troops on the field.

It was gathered that the alleged moles among the soldiers leaked the information on the deployment of soldiers from Maimalari Barracks in April this year to the terrorists which led to an ambush and killing of so many soldiers of the 101 Battalion that consequently led to soldiers' mutiny and the shooting at the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 7 Division, Major General Ahmed Mohammed.

Medical experts attached to the hospital in Vintim, after carrying out several checks and x-rays on the gunshot wounds, discovered that the officers had 'clean gunshot wounds' which meant the injuries were 99% self inflicted.

Nigerian Army formation.
Source: <http://beegeagle.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/nigerian-forces.jpg>



Some Africans Blame DoD and Western Drug Companies for Ebola

9 September 2014

“Reports narrate stories of the US Department of Defense (DoD) funding Ebola trials on humans, trials which started just weeks before the Ebola outbreak in Guinea and Sierra Leone... This research work involved injecting and infusing healthy humans with the deadly Ebola Virus.”

OE Watch Commentary: For those who covered the beginning stages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa, it is perhaps no surprise that local Liberian press would implicate the US Department of Defense and Western pharmaceutical companies for the outbreak of a disease...this time Ebola. As described in the accompanying article, whose claims would perhaps best be ignored if there were not so many accompanying internet comments, the disease was manufactured by these supposedly malevolent entities.

The author makes several claims, including that the virus is a genetically modified organism and implying Fort Detrick was possibly where Ebola and HIV were created. One particularly egregious accusation against the DoD and the pharmaceutical companies is they deliberately injected the Ebola virus into healthy Africans. The author's proof for such an allegation appears to be an amalgam of misinterpreted newspaper and government reports. Still, the author has his supporters. For example, using a rather common refrain, one individual commented that the DoD is using these diseases to cull the world population, mainly in Africa, supposedly to gain control of the Africans resources criminally.

There are also numerous comments refuting the author's findings and implications, though it is difficult to extrapolate from the internet conversations which view - evil DoD or erroneous scientific conclusions - predominates in countries such as Liberia. However, with American soldiers deploying to the epidemic's hot zones, it is important they realize that not everyone will look at them as part of the solution. In an operational environment as complex and unfamiliar as West Africa during a deadly epidemic, they may not only be fighting the disease, but also the misperception that they caused it. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**

Source: Dr. Cyril Broderick, “Ebola, AIDS Manufactured by Western Pharmaceuticals, US DoD?” Daily Observer (Liberia), 9 Sept 2014, <http://www.liberianobserver.com/security/ebola-aids-manufactured-western-pharmaceuticals-us-dod>

Ebola is a genetically modified organism (GMO)

...the discussion, in the early 1970s, made it obvious that the war was between countries that hosted the KGB and the CIA, and the ‘manufacture’ of ‘AIDS-Like Viruses’ was clearly directed at the other. In passing during the Interview, mention was made of Fort Detrick, “the Ebola Building,” and ‘a lot of problems with strange illnesses’ in “Frederick [Maryland].”

Ebola has a terrible history, and testing has been secretly taking place in Africa

Sites around Africa, and in West Africa, have over the years been set up for testing emerging diseases, especially Ebola

The World Health Organization (WHO) and several other UN Agencies have been implicated in selecting and enticing African countries to participate in the testing events, promoting vaccinations, but pursuing various testing regiments.

Disturbingly, many reports also conclude that the US government has a viral fever bioterrorism research laboratory in Kenema, a town at the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The only relevant positive and ethical olive-branch seen in all of my reading is that Theguardian.com reported, “The US government funding of Ebola trials on healthy humans comes amid warnings by top scientists in Harvard and Yale that such virus experiments risk triggering a worldwide pandemic.” That threat still persists.

There is the need to pursue criminal and civil redress for damages, and African countries and people should secure legal representation to seek damages from these countries, some corporations, and the United Nations.

Scientists allege deadly diseases such as Ebola and AIDS are bio weapons being tested on Africans. Other reports have linked the Ebola virus outbreak to an attempt to reduce Africa's population. Liberia happens to be the continent's fastest growing population.

Ebola Jeopardizes African Peacekeeping Missions

15 October 2014

“Nigerian soldiers operating in Liberia have been quarantined following the death from Ebola of a Sudanese national inside their camp, Army authorities said in Abuja yesterday.”

OE Watch Commentary: Being a peacekeeper in Africa often is not easy. There are long deployments away from home, the risk of being killed by warring factions, and the difficulties of trying to mesh disparate armies into one cohesive peacekeeping force. To these challenges add one more—the risk of contracting Ebola. As the accompanying article describes, such is the situation in Liberia, where Nigerian peacekeepers were quarantined following a Sudanese national’s death in their camp from Ebola.

The Nigerian peacekeeping contingent is part of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Liberia has suffered through two civil wars since 1980; however, since 2003, when an agreement was signed among the warring parties, UNMIL has been helping to keep the peace. Though there have been elections and a significant uptick in the economy since then, the Ebola epidemic threatens some of these recent gains. Having Nigerians and other peacekeeping forces in the country during this time of crisis is critical. Unfortunately, though understandably, with the onset of the Ebola crisis some countries are considering withdrawing their peacekeepers. The Philippines has already made the commitment, ordering its 110 soldiers in Liberia to return home in November.

Even Somalia, which does not have Ebola present within its borders, is suffering from a lack of peacekeepers due to the epidemic. The problem in that war-torn country, where government and AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) forces have been fighting against the al-Shabaab terrorist group, is that the Sierra Leone contingent of soldiers who were supposed to rotate in were told to stay home, as there were fears they would bring Ebola with them.

Thus, as a result of the outbreak, there is a need to increase the number of peacekeepers in order to maintain order and assist with public health activities. However, the outbreak is causing some peacekeepers to be restricted to their base and others to return to their home countries early. In other words, there is a stunning and deadly irony: because of the Ebola outbreak more peacekeepers are needed, but because of the Ebola outbreak fewer peacekeepers are available. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



Nigerian Army logo.

Source: Ruby Leo and Judd Leonard Okafor, “Ebola: Nigerian troops quarantined in Liberia,” Daily Trust (Nigeria), 10 Oct 2014, <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/daily/top-stories/36561-ebola-nigerian-troops-quarantined-in-liberia>

Major-General Obashina Ogunbiyi, head of the Nigerian Army medical corps, said the Ebola virus disease “has landed among our troops” in Liberia after the death of the Sudanese.

The Sudanese entered the troops’ camp to pray and “two days later, he died...All troops were quarantined this (yesterday) morning.”...

“We thought we were getting away (from Ebola). But Ebola is still with us. Any one of those soldiers can come home on holiday,” he said.

It was not clear if all the 1,300 Nigerian troops were in the camp where the Sudanese died.

This is the first time Nigerian troops in Liberia are reported to be quarantined because of the Ebola disease, which has been ravaging that nation for months.

He added the “world was not prepared and didn’t take it serious” until the current outbreak of Ebola emerged in urban populations.

“These figures might not represent the reality they are facing in these countries (Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia),” said [Dr Rui Gama] Vaz, citing disruption of already weak health systems, destruction of national economies and impeding efforts to stabilise West Africa.

Nigeria Steps Up Military Cooperation with Russia and China

20 September 2014

“But the seeming snub or nonchalant attitude towards it by its traditional allies has reportedly compelled Nigeria to turn to Russia and China for the training of its military as well as acquisition of military hardware to fight Boko Haram insurgents.”

OE Watch Commentary: In northeastern Nigeria the militant group Boko Haram has wrested control of more than ten towns from the federal government since August 2014. The leader of Boko Haram has also taken a note from ISIL and declared these territories part of an Islamic Caliphate. As this article reports, in September the Nigerian government approved President Jonathan's request to ask Nigeria's traditional allies in the West, the United States and United Kingdom, for up to \$1 billion in loans for military assistance to combat Boko Haram, which would supplement the \$6 billion in the pre-existing 2014 Nigerian military budget. However, as the article notes neither the US nor the UK have responded to the request.

A 20 September article for the website of one of Nigeria's leading newspapers, Vanguard, however, dismissed concerns about providing these loans and accused the Western countries of dithering, lacking trust in Nigeria and having a lukewarm attitude to the Nigerian government. The article says that as a result of this, government sources are now looking to Russia to provide Nigeria with new fighter jets. It also says that Russia has always been willing to supply weapons and other logistics to Nigeria when other Western countries do not and that Nigeria is now compelled to turn to Russia and China for the acquisition of military hardware.

While Russia and China are unlikely to replace the US and UK as Nigeria's foremost allies outside of Africa, they may take advantage of the West's reluctance to provide additional military support to Nigeria to gain influence in the country by providing some supplies and training to the army. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “Boko Haram: FG turns to Russia, China as USA, UK fail Nigeria,” www.vanguard.com, 20 September 2014.

The emerging scenario in the fight against terror and the steps Nigeria's government has taken would have resulted in global sensation during the Cold War. The United States would fight to keep their allies. They would never easily lose any of their allies to then Soviet Union as now represented by Russia which has, although, embraced a free market economy.

Nigeria, for years, enjoyed close ties with the West and was seen as a US ally. But the seeming snub or nonchalant attitude towards it by its traditional allies has reportedly compelled Nigeria to turn to Russia and China for the training of its military as well as acquisition of military hardware to fight Boko Haram insurgents. Already, Nigerian security personnel from the Army, Police, Department of State Services (DSS) have been dispatched to Russia for training as Special Forces to combat the Boko Haram insurgents who are mounting stiff challenge to the Nigerian security services.

According to Saturday Vanguard investigations, following the increasing sophistication of the Boko Haram terrorists, the Nigerian government approached American and British governments to procure arms for its armed forces in order to effectively counter the insurgents but the two western governments have continued to dither, a situation that may have been responsible for some of the gains recorded by terrorists in recent times. Sources said that they did not trust the Nigerian military, which was accused of lacking professionalism and which also had moles within.

Russia which has always been willing to supply weapons and some other logistics to Nigeria when other western countries are not forthcoming. As part of the agreement between Nigeria and Russia, a group of Nigerian security personnel are already in Eastern Europe for training as Special Forces with another batch, made up of the Army, Police and DSS billed to leave Nigeria next month to join the other three batches that are already in training.

Cameroon and Nigeria Conflict over Death of Boko Haram's Imposter-Leader

22 September 2014

“The handling of the Boko Haram menace put to question the capability of the Nigerian military to contain insurgency in the country, leading to a big blow to the armed forces’ integrity.”

OE Watch Commentary: A 22 September article on the Cameroonian news website, Cameroononline.org, alerted readers to a Cameroonian Army Facebook post saying that the army carried out a cross-border raid into Nigeria that killed Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau. Soon after this, the Nigerian Army announced that it – not Cameroon – was responsible for Shekau’s death. Later, both militaries agreed that the dead Boko Haram leader was not Abubakar Shekau, but rather an imposter, while the location of the real Shekau and whether he was even dead was unknown. A 2 October video from Boko Haram showing a leader purporting to be Shekau dismissed claims of his death and further added to the confusion.

The Cameroononline.org article also questioned the Nigerian Army’s capability to contain the Boko Haram insurgency. This type of criticism of Nigeria coming from Nigeria’s less powerful neighbor is unsettling to the Nigerian military, which sees itself as the most formidable force in West Africa. Moreover, Nigeria often attributes its difficulties in combating Boko Haram to the militants’ use of rear bases in Cameroon to launch attacks in Nigeria. Thus, any Cameroonian claims – especially uncorroborated ones – that it carried out operations in Nigerian territory would cause the Nigerian Army to lose face. Nigerian officials have since rejected Cameroon’s claims.

The conflicting reports of Shekau’s death and the dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon over Nigeria’s capacity to combat Boko Haram highlight one of the major problems affecting West African regional security. The countries of West Africa are yet to put their own rivalries aside and manage the mutual threat of Boko Haram. Until these countries coordinate their regional security strategies, it is Boko Haram and other militant and criminal groups that will stand to benefit.

End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)



Photos regarding conflicting reports of Shekau’s death. Source: <http://mygroove2nite.blogspot.com/2014/09/the-real-shekau-is-dead-photos-prove.html>

Source: “Cameroon Military Kill Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram Leader,” Cameroononline.com, September 22, 2014.

Cameroon Military Kill Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram Leader

The Cameroon army in a rare show of bravado released the photographs of the Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau to the public, claiming he was killed during a cross border raid deep inside Nigeria by the Cameroon military. Abubakar Shekau was killed following an aerial bombardment of his hideout inside Nigeria. The Cameroon army has ever since yesterday been in serious combat against thousands of Boko Haram fighters trying to enter Cameroon via Fotokol from Gambaral Ngala in Nigeria. It was further gathered that the development has put the Boko Haram camp in disarray in Nigeria culminating in the devastating blow the insurgents experienced in Konduga, near Maiduguri on Friday.

The handling of the Boko Haram menace had put to question the capability of the Nigeria military to contain insurgency in the country, leading to a big blow on the armed forces’ integrity. A top government official said the alleged killing of Shekau by the Cameroon military would further erode whatever remains of the integrity of the Nigeria Army. He noted with dismay the menace of Boko Haram had caused Nigeria, particularly, in the North Eastern region of the country, to lose thousands of lives with properties worth billions of naira destroyed while the military had exhibited helplessness in the fight against the insurgents.

Colombia's Peace Process Spawns Many Doubts

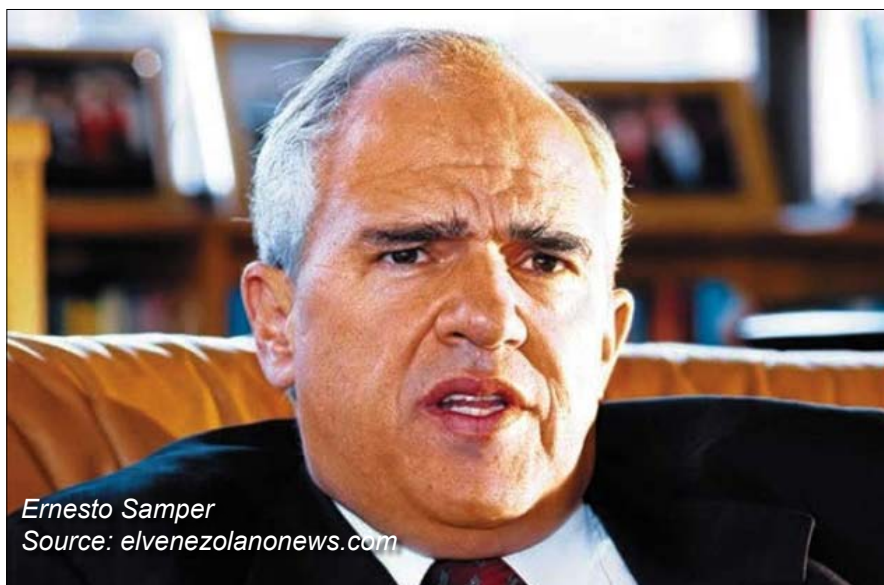
6 October 2014

“With a fat salary and the promise of obedience to the top dogs in Havana and Caracas, they made him General Secretary of ONASUR.”

OE Watch Commentary: Juan Manuel Santos won re-election as Colombia's president, and that victory has given new life to the on-going peace negotiations between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). His election, however, should not be taken to mean that a majority of Colombians are therefore happy with the azimuth that the negotiations are taking. Many Colombian opinion writers are bitterly opposed, although there is now a palpable sense of resignation within much of the opposition commenting. Some of the agreement text has been released to the public, and among the most controversial aspects seems to be a land reform that gives the FARC power over great swaths of Colombian territory. The FARC may be about to win through negotiation what was impossible for them to take with decades of military effort. What had seemed only two years ago as an epic victory of the Colombian Armed Forces over the communist FARC now might be completely reversed.

In addition, the peace process seems to be influencing curious decisions and the appearance of odd bedfellows. One is the recuperation by President Santos of ex-president Ernesto Samper, the latter having been disgraced and abandoned after being exposed as beholden to drug traffickers. Now Samper is the secretary general of a major regional organization, apparently having been sponsored for the post by Santos himself. That organization, the Union of South American Nations, is guided by the leaders of Cuba and Venezuela; Secretary Samper immediately came out sniping at the United States. **End OE Watch Commentary: (Demarest)**

(continued)



Ernesto Samper
Source: elvenezolanonews.com

Source: Miguel Posada, “Una dictadura perfecta?” (A Perfect Dictatorship?), Verdad Colombia, October 6, 2014, <http://www.verdadcolombia.org/>

“What can those of us who have an objection to what is being cooked up in Havana expect? Someone very close to the thing commented to me, ‘They hassle anybody who dares [speak out].’ The Attorney General, using witnesses like the ‘super-hacker’, will jail anyone without privilege, as he determines it, and will sue those who do. The majority will shut up in face of the threat alone. What they sign in Cuba will pass, whatever it is. If there is a referendum or a public consult, it will be preceded by a press campaign the cost of which will be enormous. That is what is coming to us Colombians. As a mode of what is coming, it is sufficient to look to Cuba.

Source: Jaime Eduardo Botero Gómez, “Documentos de La Habana y Zonas de Reserva Campesina” (Documents from Cuba and the Reservation Zones), Opinión Libre, Bogotá, September 29, 2014, <http://www.jebotero.com/documentos-de-la-habana-y-zonas-de-reserva-campesina/> (possibly broken link)

“Last week something apparently incredible happened -- the publication of the documents that contained the so-called accords thus far achieved between the National Government and the narco-terrorists of the FARC. Incredible because it had been said they were secret and that they would stay that way until everything had been agreed upon, but even more incredible is the superficiality and lack of depth of their contents....One of the most worrisome themes, that can be deduced from the reading, are the Campesino Reservation Zones as large areas for communal exploitation, apparently similar in configuration to the indigenous reservations, territories delivered by way of collective entitled, that, looking at their history, in many cases become, under guerrilla domination, ghettos of misery suitable for the cultivation of coca, the movement of guerrillas and drug traffickers, and zones of slavery into which the State does not come, because access to the zones is prohibited, in clear violation of the National Constitution.”

Continued: Colombia's Peace Process Spawns Many Doubts

Source: Andrés Quintero Olmos, “El golpe de Estado” (The Coup d’État), El Herald, Barranquilla, October 3, 2014, <http://www.elheraldo.co/columnas-de-opinion/el-golpe-de-estado-168578>

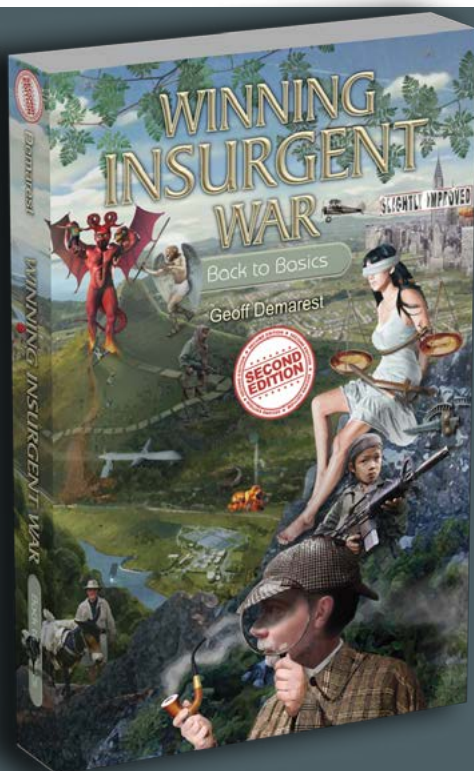
“During the government of Samper, the current president [Manuel Santos] wanted to effect a coup d’état by way of agreements with illegal groups, as has been confirmed, on various occasions, by witnesses of all kinds....according to paramilitary chief Mancuso, Santos met two times with the paramilitaries to forge a plot against Samper....Nevertheless, it will be etched in Stone that in our contemporary history we had a president that formed an alliance with -- nominating him as secretary of UNASUR -- an expresident who in the past he accused of having been financed by the drug cartels.

Source: Alexis Ortiz, “Ernesto Samper da pena ajena” (Ernesto Samper Is an Embarrassment), Frente Patriótico, October 4, 2014, <http://www.frentepatriotico.com/inicio/2014/10/06/ernesto-samper-da-pena-ajena/>

“But in August, 2014 Castrochavismo came to rescue Samper from oblivion and disregard! With a fat salary and the promise of obedience to the top dogs in Havana and Caracas, they made him General Secretary of ONASUR, an entity created by Chávez, Lula and Castro to weaken the OAS and begin, together with Mercosur, the cheapening of the democratic interamerican system.”

Source: Otoniel Arango Collazos, “Los acuerdos de La Habana primera parte” (The Havana Accords, Part 1), El Diario del Otún, Pereira, October 1, 2014, <http://www.eldiario.com.co/seccion/OPINION/los-acuerdos-de-la-habana-primera-parte1409.html>

In the El Caguan times [meaning before the deaths of several FARC military leaders and the diminution of FARC units inside Colombia], [electoral] politics was a valid recourse, but at that time armed action was preponderant; after their resounding defeat during the time of President Uribe they decided to gain in politics what they had lost on the battlefield.



Geoff Demarest's *Winning Insurgent War* is about a broader set of conflicts than just 'insurgency.' In its 144 sections, Geoff Demarest raises new and overlooked concepts related to modern conflict in a provocative manner designed to stir up debate and critical thinking. As Geoff Demarest puts it: "I hope that some of the ideas in it will be contagious."

NOW ONLINE at:
<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Winning-Insurgent-War/Winning-Insurgent-War.pdf>

Climate Change and Latin Defense

15 October 2014

“...[the World Climate Conference] seeks to have countries shoulder a commitment to mitigate climate change and to create a Green Fund.”

OE Watch Commentary: Peruvian President Ollanta Humala Tasso inaugurated the Eleventh Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas in Arequipa in early October. (Arequipa is located in Southern Peru. Its colonial era center is a designated UNESCO World heritage site.) In prioritizing climate change as a defense sector challenge, Humala's remarks were consonant with those of US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, who summarized a recent US Department of Defense report on climate change at this conference.

The context of President Humala's remarks includes a World Climate Summit being scheduled to take place in Arequipa this December. He indicated that the goal of the climate conference was commitments, supposedly from the richer countries, to a Green Fund that would be used to ameliorate the effects of global warming in the poorer countries, such as Peru. The final defense ministers' conference declaration, published the week of 12 October, was reportedly less ambitious regarding climate change than various inaugurating remarks or reports about the conference might have suggested or envisioned. It appears that the ministers of defense in the hemisphere agreed to think about climate change.

The conference also featured staple topics of agreement such as the growing role of women in armed forces, cooperation against transnational crime and in humanitarian missions, de-mining, peacekeeping, etc. This researcher did not find reporting of discussions of ideological issues, such as dictatorship, failed states, democracy, and so on, at the conference that were likely to have appeared in reporting on similar conferences in the past. The next Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas is scheduled to take place in 2016 in Trinidad and Tobago. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Peruvian President Ollanta Humala Tasso. Source: <http://www.acuerdonacional.pe>

Source: “Arequipa: Ollanta Humala inauguró conferencia de ministros de Defensa” (Ollanta Humala [President of Peru] inaugurated the Conference of Defense Ministers of the Americas), Nacional, October 13, http://www.rpp.com.pe/2014-10-13-arequipa-ollanta-humala-inauguro-conferencia-de-ministros-de-defensa-noticia_733183.html

“In his presentation, the executive indicated that the greatest threat confronting the countries today was from drug trafficking and climate change, such that he emphasized cooperation with a social criterion in order to consolidate peace. Humala Tasso announced the achievement of a world climate conference to be held in our country next December. He added that the activity, which will be carried out with an investment of 1200 million soles, seeks to have countries shoulder a commitment to mitigate climate change and to create a Green Fund.”

Source: ABC, “Cumbre americana de Defensa concluye con firma de la declaración de Arequipa (Americas Defense Summit Concludes with Signature of the Declaration of Arequipa), ABC.es, 15 October, 2014, <http://www.abc.es/agencias/noticia.asp?noticia=1693718>

“In the area of climate change, the ministers committed to an exchange of best-practice environmental experiences applicable to the defense sector, ‘including the eventual consequences of climate change, as well as measures such as specialized education in the interchange of ideas’.”

Same Executive in Bolivia

13 October 2014

“...This is a triumph of anti-colonialists and anticapitalists.”

OE Watch Commentary: Evo Morales was re-elected president of Bolivia on 12 October. The official count was late in arriving, but Morales was declared winner on the basis of exit polling, with probably more than 60% of the votes cast. The results surprised no one and were apparently accepted quickly by opponents, the strongest of which was businessman Samuel Doria Medina, who may have earned less than 30% of the total vote. It seems from the excerpts that based only on the preliminary results of this electoral exercise, socialist control over Bolivia is almost complete, as even Santa Cruz Department (center of opposition to the socialist project of the ruling Movement to Socialism Party) apparently swung to Morales.

It is difficult to take an objective or comprehensive polling of attitudes regarding the outcome, even among Bolivians. However, the perspective of many on-line and vocal members of the Bolivian opposition and other interested Spanish speakers is one of palpable incredulity and despair, as evidenced, for instance, by the long comment thread at the Spanish-language CNN report on the results. **End OE Watch Commentary (Demarest)**



Juan Evo Morales Ayma
Source: www.pulsamerica.co.uk

Source: La Vanguardia, “Bolivia da por ganador a Evo Morales pese a no tener recuento oficial” (Bolivia Makes Evo Morales the Winner In Spite of Not Having an Official Count), La Vanguardia, October 13, 2014, <http://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20141013/54417066743/bolivia-ganador-evo-morales-recuento-oficial.html>.

“On confirmation of the unofficial numbers, the president, who has governed Bolivia since 2006, will exercise a third term during the period 2015-2020. More than six million Bolivians had suffrage to vote in the general elections.”

Source: Martín Higuera, “Evo Morales dedica su victoria a Castro y a Chávez” (Evo Morales Dedicates His Victory of Castro and to Chávez), Libertad Digital, October 13, <http://www.libertaddigital.com/internacional/latinoamerica/2014-10-13/evo-morales-arrasa-en-bolivia-y-dedica-su-victoria-a-fidel-y-a-chavez-1276530569/>

“He [Morales in his victory speech] noted that “this is a triumph for all those who fight against capitalism’ and he thanked his voters: ‘Thank you very much brothers and sisters for this new triumph of the Bolivian people. How do I feel? There is a deep feeling, not only in Bolivia, but throughout Latin America, a feeling of liberation. How long were we to be subjected to the northamerican empire and a capitalist system? This is a triumph of anti-colonialists and anticapitalists.”

Source: Facebook comment thread, “Evo Morales declara su virtual triunfo en las elecciones de Bolivia” (Evo Morales Declares His Virtual Triumph in the Bolivian Elections), CNN en Español, October 12, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/CNNee/posts/10152365849922644>

“This smells of dictatorship...poor Bolivians.” [researcher considers representative, if shorter than most, comment from the thread]

Venezuela, Military Generals, and the Cartel of the Suns

28 September 2014

Source: “Venezolanas tienen cartel propio.” El Pais. Accessed on September 28, 2014 from <http://historico.elpais.com.co/paisonline/notas/Julio232007/narco.html>

OE Watch Commentary: Describing the Venezuelan-based Cartel de Los Soles (Cartel of the Suns) as a drug-trafficking cartel is misleading because it operates differently from traditional Mexican and Colombian cartels in three fundamental ways, as reported by this source. First, the Cartel de Los Soles is the only known cartel in the region completely comprising military and government personnel. Second, its rank structure is different than that of Mexican and Colombian Cartels as the Cartel de los Soles follows a horizontal structure instead of the traditional hierarchical structure. What this means is that specific individuals are brought in to obtain specific objectives and that the structure is constantly changing. Third, the Cartel de Los Soles is not responsible for producing drugs, setting prices, or restricting competition as Mexican and Colombian cartels are. Instead, it is responsible for the transport of shipments through Venezuela to key hubs in Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Suriname, and Europe via Africa.

End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)

Venezuela, Military Generals, and the Cartel of the Suns

Since the early 90s, a group of military Generals known as the Cartel of the Suns (Cartel de los Soles) has been involved in transporting and distributing inbound and outbound shipments of cocaine in Venezuela. The original Cartel of the Sun received its name in 1993 when two Anti-Drug National Guard Generals were investigated for their involvement in drug trafficking activities. As brigade commanders, each wore a single sun as insignia on their shoulder boards, and hence, were referred to as the “Cartel of the Sun.” The name was later changed to the Cartel of the Suns as higher ranking Generals with up to 4 sun insignias became involved in drug trafficking activities within Venezuela. And while this group is involved in drug trafficking activities, fundamental differences that set it apart from traditional cartels in the region have led to speculation as to why exactly the group is referred to as a “cartel.”

Is the Cartel de los Soles a Cartel?

Describing the Cartel de los Soles as an actual “cartel” is misleading as it infers the presence of a hierarchical organization typical of Mexican and Colombian organizations. Instead, the Cartel de los Soles is strictly comprised of high ranking military/government officials and follows a horizontal structure. What that means is that specific individuals are brought in to obtain specific objectives and that the structure is constantly changing.

By naming the Cartel de Los Soles a cartel, it also assumes that the group is responsible for setting the price of cocaine in the country as by definition, a cartel is an association of manufacturers or suppliers with the purpose of maintaining prices at a high level and restricting competition. And while this definition is very fitting for Mexican and Colombian based groups, the Cartel de los Soles is not involved in producing cocaine, maintaining prices or restricting competition.

Instead, this group is believed to receive their cocaine supply from Venezuelan and Colombian based labs run by the Oriental and Magdalena Medio FARC Fronts and the Norte de Valle Cartel. Emails confiscated from the computer of FARC leader Raul Reyes in 2007 further indicated that cocaine shipments are commonly exchanged for weapons. Once the product is received, Cartel de los Soles operators are responsible for transport of shipments through Venezuela to key hubs in Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Suriname, and Europe via Africa.

Fundamental differences make it clear that the Cartel de Los Soles does not follow the operational structure of traditional cartels in the region. However, their involvement in virtually every realm of Venezuela’s internal drug trafficking structure does make them a criminal force to reckon with. Furthermore, their unique make-up of high ranking officials allows them to control virtually all principal airports, checkpoints, and ports where drugs are sent and received.

Extremist Anarchist Group Conducts Full-Fledged Terrorist Attack in Chile

26 September 2014

Source: “Chile: El atentado terrorista sería obra de anarquistas.” El Pais. Accessed on September 26, 2014 from http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2014/08/07/actualidad/1407446416_460836.html

OE Watch Commentary: *Since 2005 anarchist groups have detonated explosive devices in unpopulated areas within Chile during late night hours on at least 198 separate occasions. Because of the timing and absence of civilian populace during these attacks, no casualties were reported. Recent attacks conducted in July and September 2014, however, deviated from the original pattern, as they occurred at the Santiago Metro Station, a public transit system used by an estimated 2,500,000 individuals per day. Although the Metro attacks did not result in civilian deaths, they made it clear that Chilean-based anarchist extremist cells are capable of carrying out large-scale terrorist attacks aimed at inflicting multiple casualties. End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)*

Anarchist Groups in Chile Perpetrate Full-Fledged Terrorist Attack

Since 2005, at least 198 anarchist perpetrated attacks have been reported in Chile. None of these attacks caused deaths or injuries, but two recent attacks in July and September 2014 deviated from the original modus operandi of the anarchist groups, and for this reason, are being deemed terrorist attacks.

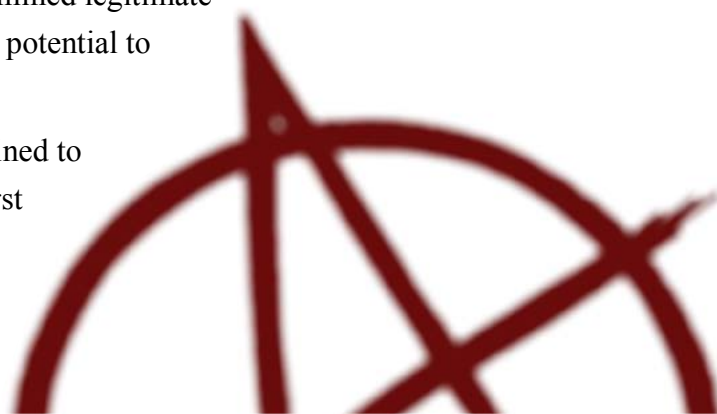
July 15 Attack at the Santiago Metro Station:

On July 13, 2014, the last subway car of the night pulled into Los Dominicos stop at the Santiago Metro Station. Per protocol, a subway employee began checking the train cars one by one to ensure they were all empty during which time a backpack was found underneath a seat in the first car. The bag contained a fire extinguisher filled with gunpowder and a clock wired to the device with cables. This incident was immediately reported to subway security and police. In response to the threat, the subway platform was evacuated, and shortly after, the device detonated before authorities even had a chance to look at it. No injuries were reported in conjunction with this attack, but it represented the first instance in which alleged anarchists dared to detonate an explosive device in a public forum with citizens still present.

September 2014 Attack:

On September 08, 2014, crowds gathered to enjoy lunch at a fast food restaurant located next to the Escuela Militar metro station in Las Condes neighborhood of Santiago, Chile. At 1405, a fire extinguisher filled with gunpowder was detonated leaving 14 injured. At least two of the victims suffered full limb amputations, but as in the first attack, no deaths were reported. Hours following the September incident, the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire (CCF) released an online statement claiming responsibility for both Metro attacks. They further blamed authorities for injuries sustained by civilians and claimed that their target was not the civilian populace, but the “structures, properties and enforcers of power.” In carrying out the two Metro attacks, the CCF not only undermined legitimate anarchist groups dedicated to creating lasting social change, but also highlighted its potential to conduct potential large scale terrorist attacks.

Possible future attacks are also of concern, but the Chilean government is determined to thwart any attempts and to prosecute offenders by enacting an anti-terrorism law first used during the Pinochet dictatorship. This law allows for anonymous witness testimony by the prosecution and greatly increased sentences. In applying it, the Chilean government likely hopes to dismantle small extremist cells with probable international ties while restoring peace and tranquility to the streets of Santiago.



Mexican Cartels Use Landing Strips Owned by the Costa Rican Government

28 August 2012

Source: “Cartel mexicano usa pista de gobierno tico.” Diario extra. Accessed on August 28, 2014 from <http://www.diarioextra.com/Dnew/noticiaDetalle/238846&N1=SGFsY8OzbiBHdWVycmVybw==&E1=ZmFsY29uNDY3OUBob3RtYWlsLmNvbQ==#.U-559HxwKWw>. Facebook

OE Watch Commentary: Costa Rica has 120 authorized airstrips. However, El Diario Extra reported information indicating that authorities responsible for registering incoming and outgoing flights are only present at three major airports (Juan Santamaria, Tobías Bolaños, and Daniel Oduber). This source further indicated that along the Pacific Coast Mexican drug cartels are taking advantage of the fact that authorities are not present. This is evidenced by the fact that on a daily basis radars detect at least seven clandestine flights in this area. Mexican traffickers are also known to take advantage of the Pacific Coast’s rural population by buying up properties where they build their own airstrips, which generally measure between 1 and 2.5 kilometers. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**



Red markers indicating several locations of Costa Rican landing strips used for drug trafficking.

Mexican Cartels Use Landing Strips Owned by the Costa Rican Government

In the early 90s, the Costa Rican government built a 3 kilometer landing strip in Barra de Parismina; a small village located on Costa Rica’s Pacific Coast. This landing strip was later abandoned by the government as it lacked infrastructure. Today, it is being utilized by an unspecified Mexican drug cartel to bring drug shipments from South America into Central America.

Landing Strip Infrastructure

To better guide incoming flights, the cartel financed a make-shift lighting system that is illuminated at night. These same flights are unloaded by waiting personnel who have built small shacks along the length of the landing strip. Just recently, an incoming flight from South America allegedly crashed near the aforementioned landing strip. The remaining pieces of the plane were then set on fire and removed before police arrived on the scene according to residents of Barra de Parismina. Residents also indicated to the Diario Extra media source that they are afraid because drug trafficking activities are out of control in Barra de Parismina and other areas along the Pacific Coast including:

- Puerto Jimenez
- Punta Burica
- Near the Corcovado National Park
- In the Caribbean zone in more specifically in the Tortuguero, Parisima, Barras del Colorado, and Sixaola River areas.

Currently, authorities are conducting investigations on multiple recent flights and at least three landing strips located near the Corcovado National Park.

Chinese Demand Fuels Illegal Logging of Protected Wood in Mexico

28 September 2014

OE Watch Commentary: As reported by Expression Libre, illegal logging operations in Mexico are generally run by drug cartels and are centered in Michoacan, Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Campeche, and Chiapas. This source further indicated that in Michoacan increased Chinese demand for a protected species known as the granadillo tree has significantly increased since 2012. Granadillo wood is highly popular for furniture and, according to Alejandro del Mazo, the Federal Attorney for the Environmental Protection Agency in Mexico, illegal loggers target the granadillo tree because of its high commercial value. For example, a cubic meter of granadillo sells for \$(USD) 2,300. As for finished goods, a small granadillo desk can be found on the internet for around \$(USD) 1,390. **End OE Watch Commentary (Fiegel)**

Source: “Delincuencia organizada vende madera fina a China.” Expression Libre. Accessed on September 15, 2014 from <http://www.expressionlibre.org/main/nacional/delincuencia-organizada-vende-madera-fina-china>

Chinese Demand Fuels Illegal Logging of Protected Wood in Mexico

The illegal trafficking of a protected wood known as granadillo has increased significantly over the last few years in Mexico. This idea is evidenced by high seizure rates in 2013 and 2014. For example, Mexican customs seized 23,000 cubic meters of illegally logged granadillo in 2013. To date in 2014, they have already seized 21,000 cubic meters. The first commonality between seizures in 2013 and 2014 is that they all occurred at the Port of Lazaro Cardenas in Michoacan or at the Port of Manzanillo in Colima. The second commonality is that all of the shipments were destined for Hong Kong, China. Since the granadillo tree is a protected species in Mexico, illegal shipments are commonly concealed in containers carrying large shipments of legal materials. In comparison to illegal shipments, legal exports of granadillo are much lower. In 2008, Mexican customs reported the legal exportation of 8 cubic meters. In 2012, legal exports of granadillo jumped to 10,662 cubic meters marking Mexico as the third largest international exporter following Panama (27,642 cubic meters) and Nicaragua (40,618 cubic meters).

The Strategic Implications of Chinese Companies Going Global

By COL Heino Klinck, US Army; Edited by Cindy Hurst, FMSO

China's overseas direct investment (ODI) has become one of the biggest economic stories of the 21st century. In a relatively short time span, China has become the number one overseas investor amongst developing countries as well as the world's sixth largest overseas investor overall with \$150 billion invested in foreign markets. This marks a development of strategic significance with implications that go beyond simple economics. This paper explores China's economic and political strategies of going global as well as the geopolitical implications for national security in political, economic, and diplomatic terms for the United States and other countries.

<http://fms.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/FAO/Strategic-Implications.pdf>

India's Satellite Navigation System One Step Closer to Operational

16 October 2014

“Once the regional navigation system is in place, India need not be dependent on others.”

OE Watch Commentary: As noted in OE Watch for September 2013 and May 2014, India has been successfully deploying its own Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) to provide an alternative to the US-operated global positioning system (GPS). As article one describes, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched the third satellite in the IRNSS constellation on 16 October 2014. This launch is important because, although the complete constellation will have seven satellites, IRNSS will only require four satellites to function, and a regional alternative to the GPS could be operational in early 2015. As article two describes, IRNSS-1C will ultimately be stationed in a geostationary orbit above the equator near India. This is a similar concept to the Chinese Beidou navigation satellite system, but differs from the GPS-model, which uses a constellation requiring a minimum of 24 satellites located in mid-earth orbit. By limiting coverage to the Indo-Asian region, the IRNSS is capable of functioning with far fewer satellites. From the Indian perspective, the launch provides multiple successes. Besides being a step closer to independence in satellite navigation, India has another success for its indigenously produced Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), coming soon after the success of ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission. All of these achievements together represent major victories for India in the Asian space race. **End OE Watch Commentary (Freese)**

Source: Venkatachari Jagannathan (), “India Close To Having Its Own Navigation Satellite System,” Indo-Asian News Service, 16 October 2014, http://northeastnews.in/news_details.php?c=7&n=7709

India Thursday moved tantalisingly close to having its own satellite navigation system as it smoothly launched a satellite with its rocket ... India is just a satellite and a couple of months away from having its own satellite navigation system ... The navigational system, developed indigenously by India, is designed to provide accurate position information service to users within the country and up to 1,500 km from the nation's boundary line ... The fourth navigation satellite is expected to be launched this December ... The satellite has two kinds of payloads - navigation and ranging. The navigation payload would transmit navigation service signals to the users ... The ranging payload consists of C-band transponder which facilitates accurate determination of the range of the satellite ... The system, expected to provide a position accuracy of better than 20 metres in the primary service area, is similar to the global positioning system of the US, Glonass of Russia, Galileo of Europe, China's Beidou or the Japanese Quasi Zenith Satellite System ... While the ISRO is silent on the navigation system's strategic application, it is clear that the IRNSS will be used for defence purposes as well ... By adding more satellites, the service area can be expanded, an ISRO official said ... Once the regional navigation system is in place, India need not be dependent on others

Source: Salome Phelamei, “India Successfully Launches IRNSS-1C Navigation Satellite on Board PLSV C-26,” Zee Media Bureau, 16 October 2014, http://zeenews.india.com/news/space/india-successfully-launches-irns-1c-navigation-satellite-on-board-plsv-c-26_1485346.html

... At 1:32 am Thursday, the rocket (PSLV-C26) carrying the 1,425-kg Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System-1C (IRNSS-1C) lifted off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh ... Initially, the satellite was scheduled for launch October 10, but was put off by a week due to a glitch in the telemetry system. IRNSS-1C is the third out of seven in the Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) series of satellites after IRNSS-1A and IRNSS-1B. IRNSS-1C is the first geostationary satellite in the IRNSS system ... The first satellite, IRNSS-1A, was launched onboard PSLV-C22 on 1 July 2013 with the seven-satellite constellation scheduled for completion by the end of 2015 ... India recently created space history by becoming the first country in the world to enter the Martian orbit in first attempt ... India's successful Mars mission has also made the country as the first Asian nation to reach the Red Planet.

“... it is clear that the IRNSS will be used for defence purposes as well”

Economic Changes in India under PM Modi

17 September 2014

“Modi will seek to win as many state elections as possible, especially in the next two years, to gain seats in the Upper House and ease the passage of legislations,”

OE Watch Commentary: *Western investors, the international service sector, and all manner of commodity producers have high hopes in the proposed economic and political reforms expected from newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Banking on his very business- and industry- friendly track record as governor of the province of Gujarat, global financial interests are keen to buy, sell, and invest.*

India media are reporting Standard and Poor's recent upgrade of India's sovereign credit rating from negative to stable. An article from The Economic Times, affiliated with the Times of India, updates the assessment and provides insight into Modi's strategies for economic reform and industrial growth.

Since the summer election the news media of India have continued their speculation on policies and programs yet to be announced or implemented by Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government. His visit to the United States in September 2014 has proved to be a turning point for action. The Diplomat, a current-affairs magazine for the Asia-Pacific, reports the visit in detail. A more recent report from The Financial Express, India's oldest financial daily, details a government initiative to slash labor inspections across all sectors of industry. Another piece from this source shows the Government of India's commercial negotiation for Chinese investment into Special Economic Zones. This comes after successful solicitation of Chinese partnership in the manufacturing sector.

This rapid change from candidate promise to incumbent policy and action is a welcome change across the region. A report from Nikkei Asian Review, a Japan-based business newspaper, tells of the regional reverberations that the

Source: The Economic Times, “PM Narendra Modi to shy from reforms initially, to disappoint Optimists: S&P,” October 16, 2014 http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/44836290.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

International rating agency Standard & Poor's, which recently upgraded its outlook on the sovereign ratings, said today that the economic performance of the country could “disappoint optimists” through 2015, but will better over a longer-term as the government initiates bold reforms.

“We believe that the country's economic performance will ... be better than the fears of pessimists over the long-term,” Standard & Poor's credit analyst Joydeep Mukherji said in a report today.

In the commentary, which comes a day after exit polls predicted gains for the BJP in the Haryana and Maharashtra polls, Mukherji said Prime Minister Modi will not take any dramatic reform measures immediately but will wait to add as many states in the kitty first before ushering in reforms....

Source: The Diplomat, “What Did Narendra Modi's US Trip Accomplish?” October 2, 2014 <http://thediplomat.com/2014/10/what-did-narendra-modis-us-trip-accomplish/>

.... As many recent incidents and events have shown, Indians, especially the middle-class Indians who are most likely to influence public opinion, are prickly about India's honor and pride. They want a leader who is seen as being a proactive advocate of India and is heard and respected by the international community and world powers. In other words, they want a leader who can generate buzz, and Modi accomplishes this.

Marketing

...In speech after speech, a clear ideology that we can call “Modism” or “Moditva” has emerged, a vision that seeks a strong and proactive role for India that includes being heard at international forums, reaching out to non-resident Indians, and courting investment....

... marketing goes hand in hand with policy improvements....

Policy Accomplishments

.... in New York, Modi announced new visa and travel schemes that will make it easier for people to get to India. This in turn will help business and people to people connections. “People of Indian Origin” (PIO) cardholders will now be able to get lifelong visas for travel to India. ...Additionally, US tourists will be able to get electronic travel authorizations and visas on arrival in India.

... Modi also met with business leaders and urged them to invest in India ... Modi said that “today, I can say with confidence that within six months, we will implement and enforce all parameters of ease of business...”

(continued)

Continued: Economic Changes in India under PM Modi

“Narendra Modi’s whirlwind trip to the United States focused mainly on marketing India and developing a positive image.”

Government of India’s economic reform is having across not only the region, but also the entire globe. Volkswagen, Amazon, and Japanese companies are lining up to invest in India.

*These economic reforms, supported by a strong political foundation in the prime minister’s office, the Lok Shaba (India’s Congress), and State governments, are an emerging force that requires careful attention and analysis. They can tell us much regarding the track regional relations (India and China for one) will be taking over the near term. **End OE Watch Commentary (Welch)***

... Modi also added that “the less the regulations and law, the more fresh air” and “there should be no existence of tax terrorism. There should be a simplification of taxation system.” Expressing a strong belief in India’s future prospects, Modi urged American businesses to invest in India before the queue became too long.

...the main thrust of Modi’s visit to the United States was to discuss business and investment (Modi’s top priority) rather than to make political deals.

Source: “Narendra Modi Vows to End ‘Inspector Raj’, Will Allow Technology to Dictate Course of Labour Reforms,” The Financial Express, October 16, 2014, <http://www.financialexpress.com/news/narendra-modi-vows-to-end-inspector-raj-will-allow-technology-to-dictate-course-of-labour-reforms/1299011>

The labour reforms announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi will go a long way addressing concerns raised by the industry over the high-handed approach of inspectors. The new labour inspection scheme, which is being seen as a model e-governance initiative of the government, would bring manual intervention with regard to inspections to a minimum and allow technology to dictate what to inspect and how to inspect.

Industry has raised concerns that one of the impediments for investments is the cumbersome processes in the country. This has put the country closer to the bottom of the list of countries on ease of doing business index...

Under the new scheme, computer would randomly decide where an inspector has to go inspection and not the inspector himself. Moreover, once the inspection is complete, a report has to be filed within 72 hours. And the entire information has also to be put on the website so that owner of premises where inspection was conducted can file a grievance, if required.

At present inspectors have discretionary powers and they have reportedly used this power often to harass owners of industrial units. The plethora of labour laws also does not help the industry.

“Simplification of procedures has been a long standing concern for industry... the launch of the ‘labour inspection scheme’ will bring in a lot of transparency and accountability,” said Chandrajit Banerjee, director general at Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)....

(continued)

Continued: Economic Changes in India under PM Modi

“\$20 billion commitment was made by China to invest in industrial parks in Gujarat and Maharashtra.”

Source: “India Makes Pitch for Chinese Investments in Special Economic Zones,” The Economic Times, October 15, 2014 http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/44827999.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

After attracting Chinese investments to its industrial parks, India today pitched for China’s participation in Special Economic Zones (SEZ).

...In the meeting, Indian Ambassador to China, Ashok Kantha asked Chinese companies to build on the successful visit of Xi to India and the launch of ‘Make in India’ campaign, aimed at ensuring investor-friendly environment for businessmen in the country.

...The Indian delegation will also meet the officials of Chinese Ministry of Commerce and visit Tianjin, Shanghai and Suzhou.

The Indian Embassy will also organise investment promotion seminars in other cities including Qingdao and Chongqing next month.

Source: “Anticipation for Modi’s Reforms Fuels Investment Turnaround in India,” Nikkei Asia Review, September 19, 2014, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Trends/Anticipation-for-Modi-s-reforms-fuels-investment-turnaround-in-India>

Business investment is roaring back in India as expectations grow for Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s economic reforms....

Capital outlays by domestic businesses and direct investment from foreign companies have both shot up since Modi came to power in May.

Tata Group, the nation’s largest conglomerate, has announced plans to spend a total of \$35 billion in investments over the next three years. Reliance Industries, a core company of Reliance Group, has decided to spend \$30 billion over the next three years.

These ambitious investment plans by the major Indian conglomerates with interests ranging from retail to energy are indicative of recovering business investment all over India.

.... New infrastructure projects are also coming on line. State-owned Power Grid Corp. of India, the country’s top power transmission company, decided to invest roughly 55.5 billion rupees (\$988 million) to improve the transmission network in the central state of Chhattisgarh.

....Foreign investment, one of the priorities of the government, is showing recovery signs as well. For the May-June period, direct foreign investment reached \$5.5 billion, up an impressive 80% from a year earlier....

North Korea's "Alliance" with Russia against Prompt Global Strike

2 October 2014

“The US forces’ ‘Prompt Global Strike plan’ strategy once again clearly shows that our main enemy is none other than the United States.”

Source: Ri Kyo'ng-su, “Maintaining the ‘Sole Superpower’ Status Is Futile Fantasy,” Rodong Sinmun Online, 2 October 2014. <http://www.rodong.rep.kp/ko/>

OE Watch Commentary: 12 October 1948, a month after the official founding of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, marks the official day of the establishment of diplomatic relations between North Korea and the Soviet Union. This year Rodong Sinmun, North Korea's state-run newspaper, celebrated the 66th anniversary, declaring a renewed effort to enhance relations between the USSR's successor (Russia) and North Korea. Interestingly, there was no news report on the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. This diplomatic snub likely stems from Pyongyang's displeasure with China's nurturing warm relations with South Korea. While the North Korean leadership cannot sever relations with its chief patron (China), it can try to provoke jealousy in Beijing by trying to draw closer to Russia. As the Kremlin leadership also seeks to expand its influence, it has welcomed these North Korean overtures with various trade agreements, to include negotiations on providing Pyongyang with advanced weapon systems. As the accompanying excerpt points out, their relationship has been further strengthened by a mutual protest against the Prompt Global Strike plan (PGS) proposed by the US.

To the Kremlin, North Korea remains a helpful proxy in its fight to derail the US PGS plan. For the leadership in Pyongyang, a closer military relationship with Russia to counter the US PGS plan helps to protect its own nuclear weapons program. **End OE Watch Commentary (Kim)**

...Information has been revealed that the US military have recently rounded off a new “Prompt Global Strike plan” strategy to strike any targets on earth within one hour. This strategy is reportedly targeting our country and Iran, while regarding China as the prime strike target.

This shows many things. The United States is the only country that has its military bases of all sorts in every continent and every ocean on earth. Just with the three major strategic nuclear strike means such as the intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and submarines, and strategic nuclear bombers deployed in the US mainland and everywhere around the world, it is fully capable of striking the selected targets within a brief period of time. Still discontented, however, the United States is spending enormous funds in developing hypersonic strike means....

...Then, the question is why the United States is running amok in developing cutting-edge weapons after working out the “Prompt Global Strike plan” strategy.

Stating the bottom line up front, this is to maintain the declining “sole superpower” status at any cost and to thereby realize the wild ambition for global hegemony without fail.

It is the United States' invariable wild ambition and strategy to put the whole world under its control as the “sole superpower.”

...This United States is still running amok in trying to gain hegemony over the world by developing cutting-edge weapons after working out the “Prompt Global Strike plan” strategy. This is the last-ditch effort of the one who is collapsing.

...Russia has set out to work out emergency countermeasures, even if itself is not included in the prime strike targets of the US forces' “Prompt Global Strike plan” strategy. Upon the disclosure of the US forces' new strategy, the Russian defense ministry has revealed the possibility that it would set out to develop its own style “blitzkrieg strike system” in response.

This being the situation, there is no need to talk about the countries which are included in the list of the strike targets of the US forces' “Prompt Global Strike plan” strategy.

The US forces' “Prompt Global Strike plan” strategy once again clearly shows that our main enemy is none other than the United States....

Russia and China: Sanctions Offer Potential for Strategic and Technological Cooperation

11 October 2014

“China and Russia are each other’s ‘most key, most important’ strategic coordination partners...”

OE Watch Commentary: Based on reports originating from China and Russia, sanctions imposed on Russia by the West could potentially further build military and technology ties between the two countries. In the first article, which was published in the Moscow Times, the author argues that these sanctions could last years. Backing up his belief, he cites prior US and European restrictions placed on China in response to the 1989 Tiananmen crisis, explaining that despite the fact that the events have receded into history and relations between the West and China have improved, these restrictions remain in place today. Therefore, according to the author, restrictions recently placed on Russia could last for some time.

He goes on to explain that the West has long enforced numerous informal restrictions on highly complex technology exports to Russia, and now those restrictions have been formalized in the way of sanctions. This is forcing Russia to seek alternative suppliers of complex technological equipment, and, according to the author, China is the logical first choice for several reasons. First, Chinese industry has nearly met or even surpassed Western levels of development in certain areas. The author points out as examples that China developed the fastest supercomputer, Tianhe-2, and has made great progress in building high-speed rail links. Second, China’s production of military technology complements Russia’s. The author explains that China is strong where Russia is weak and vice versa. For example, Russia has been heavily reliant on Europe and Israel for serial production of its own strike drones, while China has already begun full-scale production and export of at least two types of reconnaissance and strike drones. According to the article, “the move toward a new level of industrial and military-technical cooperation between Russia and China has already begun.”

The second article, published by Chinese state-owned Xinhua, paints a broader picture of Sino-Russian cooperation. The article, which was based on an exclusive interview with Oleg Formichev, Russia’s Deputy Minister of Economic Development, describes cooperation between the

Source: Vasily Kashin, “Russia Must Expand Relationship with China,” The Moscow Times, October 5, 2014, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/russia-must-expand-relationship-with-china/508425.html>

Russia Must Expand Relationship with China

...

The move toward a new level of industrial and military-technical cooperation between Russia and China has already begun. For example, Russian Technologies and federal space agency Roscosmos are already consulting with CASIC on the possibility of procuring electronic components for satellites...

Russia’s decision to establish closer industrial cooperation with China is not only a consequence of sanctions. Russian industry felt the need to pursue this path earlier, but the peculiarities of the Chinese market and the fact that Russia already had long-standing ties with Europe weakened its willingness to change. The current crisis provides an opportunity for Russia to diversify its foreign economic relations. What’s more, the new contacts with Asia will endure even after the current sanctions are lifted.

Source: “Interview: High-tech Cooperation Further Boosts China-Russia Relationship,” Xinhua, October 11, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2014-10/11/c_133707402.htm

Interview: High-tech Cooperation Further Boosts China-Russia Relationship

Scientific and technological cooperation is becoming another stimulus to China-Russia relationship, Russia’s Deputy Minister of Economic Development Oleg Formichev has said.

...

Joint projects cover areas of new materials, environmental and energy-saving technology, biotechnology, high-energy physics, chemical engineering and petrochemistry, the deputy minister said, adding that substantial support was given by both countries’ governments.

...

Besides successful energy cooperation, there is a fresh impetus in such cooperation areas as infrastructure construction, civil aviation, ship building, automobile manufacture, transportation, finance, high-tech, agriculture and aerospace, Formichev said.

(continued)

Continued: Russia and China: Sanctions Offer Potential for Strategic and Technological Cooperation

two countries as falling under the categories of high-tech transfers, expanding trade, energy cooperation in oil, gas, and nuclear power technology, and manufacturing in various key industries.

The last article, written from China's viewpoint, is about Xi Jinping's global diplomacy trips. According to the article, "During his trip to Russia in March 2013, Chairman Xi emphasized during his meeting with President Putin that China and Russia are each other's 'most key, most important' strategic coordination partners, and that deepening the strategic relationship between China and Russia holds a 'priority' strategic position in the overall diplomatic situation and foreign relations of the two countries."

*China must proceed cautiously with this one, despite the seeming win-win proposition of creating closer ties to Russia. China shares important strategic, economic, and even military ties with Ukraine, but Russia is an important partner as well. Therefore, China will have to continue to play an important balancing act between its relations with Ukraine and Russia going forward. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)***

Source: Chen Xiangyang, "We Welcome Hitching Rides!" Guoji Xianqu Daobao, September 23, 2014, <http://china.ihlnews.com/2014/0923/64738.shtml>

We Welcome Hitching Rides!

First, Chairman Xi's trip to Russia and multiple "Xi - Putin meetings" solidly promoted the strategic mutual trust and coordination between China and Russia. During his first trip to Russia in March 2013, Chairman Xi emphasized during his meeting with President Putin that China and Russia are each other's "most key, most important" strategic coordination partners, and that deepening the strategic relationship between China and Russia holds a "priority" strategic position in the overall diplomatic situation and foreign relations of the two nations. China and Russia issued a "Joint Declaration", emphasized their support of each other on issues relating to the other's core interests such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security, and determined to deepen their mutual understanding, coordination, and cooperation on the anti-missile issue.

On 11 September of this year, Chairman Xi once again met with President Putin in Dushanbe, just as Russia was coming under sanctions pressure from the west due to the Ukraine crisis. Without a doubt, the understanding from China was highly prized. Chairman Xi pointed out that China and Russia should increase their support of each other, expand the degree to which they are opening up to each other, mutually "give and take", together resist external risks and challenges, and achieve development and revitalization for both. He emphasized the need to continue to promote large strategic cooperation projects between the two countries, launching the China - Russia western natural gas pipeline project as soon as possible, in particular.

Potential Obstacles to More Contractors in Kazakhstan's Armed Forces

29 September 2014

“There was hope that with the introduction of a contract army this would disappear...The problem of our contract service is that they do not take someone who is needed, but any who show up”

OE Watch Commentary: In the summer of 2011 Kazakhstan's Senate (Upper House of Parliament) rejected a plan to send four officers on rotating deployments to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. There was a particularly strong and visible campaign by a veterans group, many of whom are veterans of the Soviet-Afghan War, to reject the deployment. As the accompanying article shows, this group continues to have an active voice in military affairs. The interview in the article with Colonel Pashevich, head of the Combat Brotherhood association, focuses on personnel in the Armed Forces and shows how there might be some obstacles to Kazakhstan increasing the number of contractors in its Armed Forces. Pashevich's viewpoint is fairly blunt, and while he is speaking as head of the association he is pictured in uniform, though it is unknown if he is retired or in an active duty or reserve status.

The article was published a week after a member of the Border Guards killed a senior NCO in his unit. Details of the murder are still emerging, but it has brought up memories of a border guard in a detachment on the Kazakh-Chinese border that was convicted for killing his entire unit (at the border post) and a park ranger in May 2012 in a contentious case that reportedly involved dedovshchina (hazing). The government of Kazakhstan had hoped that a larger percentage of contractors would improve its Armed Forces in several areas, including a reduction in cases of hazing. There are no statistics on hazing cases related to contractors versus conscripts brought up in the interview, but Pashevich believes that increased numbers of contractors have not had a desired effect, and that the Armed Forces should be made up of conscripts. One other thing in the interview worth noting is that he mentions there is no government funding for youth clubs. This could be true, but contradicts the activities of several organizations and events for youth from the past few years (see: July 2014 OE Watch, “Youth Programs of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan). The government of Kazakhstan is likely to move forward with adding more contract positions in the Armed Forces, while keeping some conscripts. This association has had some influence on government and military affairs in the past, and it would be worth watching to see what effect it might have on a contractor force for Kazakhstan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Gubaydulin, Oleg. “Полковник Сергей ПАШЕВИЧ: О новой дедовщине, сынках чиновников и потерянной памяти [Colonel Sergey Pashevich: the new dedovshchina, the sons of officials and the lost memorials],” Karavan, 29 September 2014.

Colonel Sergey Pashevich: the new dedovshchina, the sons of officials and the lost memorials

How are Kazakhs regarded in their own army?...When will dedovshchina finally be eradicated?...The head of the National Association of veterans, Combat Brotherhood, “Afghan” Colonel Sergey Pashevich answered questions from Karavan...

(Karavan): The fall draft is going on right now. How are these drafts different from Soviet ones?

(Col. Pashevich): ...the force is mixed with conscripts and contractors. In Kazakhstan there was a period when guys were becoming contractors and had never been in the army. They took courses and then went into the army...I think someone needs to serve as a soldier before becoming a contractor...

(Karavan): Was there hazing in those years you were in the army?

(Col. Pashevich): It started like this: I'm older and I will not clean my own area – you are here for that...in time it became assault.

(Karavan): Why is it not possible to deal with dedovshchina?

(Col. Pashevich): There was hope that with the introduction of a contract army this would disappear...contractors also commit crimes. The problem of our contract service is that they do not take someone who is needed, but any who show up...military service is not considered prestigious...Few members of parliament can say that their son has served or became an officer...The importance (of youth clubs) cannot be overstated, but there is no zero attention from government agencies. There is no official registration of such clubs and no funding...

(Karavan): In your opinion, should military service be mandatory?

(Col. Pashevich): Yes, there should be compulsory military service in Kazakhstan...

Questioning Russian Security Assistance to Tajikistan

3 October 2014

“Political scientist Rashid G. Abdullo believes that the promised \$200 million in security assistance does not mean that it is immediately available”

OE Watch Commentary: Russian economic and security cooperation with Tajikistan receives a fair amount of skepticism from Tajik media, which believe that Tajikistan receives unfavorable conditions as part of any agreement with Russia. The accompanying article from Asia-Plus is another example of that skepticism, while the article from Nezavisimaya Gazeta could be a source that is shaping the Tajik perspective. The Asia-Plus article references \$200 million in security assistance that Russia agreed to provide Tajikistan to help modernize its Armed Forces as part of a deal in the fall of 2012. Since then, there have been concerns in Tajikistan that the security assistance would never materialize and that it was an insignificant amount compared to the \$1 billion that Kyrgyzstan would receive as part of a similar deal at the same time.

Part of the recent skepticism could be coming from sources like the article in Nezavisimaya Gazeta, which reports that Tajikistan has already received less money from Russia than had been budgeted. The reduction in funding mentioned is connected to economic development projects, but could be causing concern that it would also affect security assistance. Details of the \$200 million deal have not been publicized; however, the quote from the Tajik political scientist is the first time that someone has mentioned how the money might be spent over several years, including possible allocation for training purposes, not necessarily for weapons or equipment. Even if Russia does not provide the full \$200 million, it is not likely to lead to a fractured security partnership. Instead, Tajikistan might look for other opportunities to receive security assistance, as it has from India over the past several years. Security analysts in the region believe India's involvement pushed Russia to maintain its partnership with Tajikistan and offer larger amounts of assistance. Ultimately, while there are legitimate concerns about the Russian economy and the country's ability to fulfill agreements in the near future, there are likely to be other factors that will shape security assistance to Tajikistan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: Asia-Plus. “Разменная монета или залог безопасности? [Small change or a security deposit?],” 3 October 2014. <http://news.tj/ru/news/razmennaya-moneta-ili-zalog-bezopasnosti>

Small change or a security deposit?

On October 1, 2013, exactly one year ago, Tajikistan's parliament ratified an agreement to extend the term of the Russian military base on its territory until 2042. According to the agreement, Tajikistan will receive Russian oil without customs duties and Russia will assist Tajik migrant (workers) and provide assistance in the modernization of the Tajik army...

...the other condition was to assist in the modernization of the army, the training of military specialists, but according to experts, these promises are postponed...only a tenth of the military assistance has been fulfilled...Political scientist Rashid G. Abdullo believes that the promised \$200 million in security assistance does not mean that it is immediately available...this assistance will be somewhat stretched out and relate to the increasing degree and ability of the Tajik side to master the provided security assistance...

Source: Panfilova, Viktoriya. “Москве придется отложить проекты в Центральной Азии (Moscow will be setting aside its projects in Central Asia),” Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 23 September 2014. http://www.ng.ru/cis/2014-09-23/6_asia.html

Moscow will be setting aside its projects in Central Asia

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) published a prognosis of the coming economic decline in CIS countries...According to their estimation, the vulnerable economies of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, which have already received hundreds of millions of dollars less than budgeted...

...The main Russian investments in Central Asia are directed to the energy sector...As for the Russian investments in hydropower in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, it will soon be realized that these projects will be set aside indefinitely...The emerging situation does not seem to be a disadvantage for China, which for the third year is the largest investor and trading partner of each of the states in the region...

The Function of Kyrgyzstan's Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Takes Shape

19 September 2014

“the units involved utilized modern weapons, and military and special equipment in the inventory of the Border Guards and the General Staff of the Armed Forces”

OE Watch Commentary: The military and security forces of Central Asia have taken part in a number of joint exercises in the past few years with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), many of which involved a scenario of combating a group of militants that had infiltrated and taken over a sparsely populated area near a border. The accompanying article reports on a recent exercise conducted by Kyrgyz security forces, and while the scenario is similar, there are a few other things worth noting.

The exercise took place in the Jalal-Abad Province and not in the Batken Province, where the majority of recent violent border incidents have taken place and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan conducted incursions in 1999 and 2000. The terrain in Jalal-Abad (near the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border) is similar to Batken, with small mountain villages and no major roads.

It is possible that the Kyrgyz government chose this site for the exercise in order not to cause any tension along the border with Tajikistan. Though there is tension between the two governments over the border, officials on both sides have worked fairly closely to try to resolve the demarcation issue, even after violent incidents. Lastly, the Kyrgyz Border Guards carried out the exercise on the ground, but it was coordinated through the Chief of the General Staff of the Kyrgyz Armed Forces, in addition to support from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Center in Bishkek. As much as the exercise trained to combat possible threats, it could have been conducted to determine any issues the Chief of the General Staff (a position created in February 2014) might have during a crisis. According to the Chief of the General Staff's function, he would coordinate and even take operational control of military and security forces during an armed conflict. This may not happen every time there is a violent incident on the border, but this does show how roles in the Kyrgyz Armed Forces have been changing. **End OE Watch Commentary (Stein)**

Source: “Спецназ уничтожил группу боевиков на границе в Ала-Буке в рамках учений ГПС и ЮЗРК [Special forces destroyed a group of militants on the border in Ala-Buk in an exercise of the Border Guards Service and the Southwest Regional Command],” 19 September 2014.

Special forces destroyed a group of militants on the border in Ala-Buk in an exercise of the Border Guards Service and the Southwest Regional Command

...on September 18, a detachment of special forces of Kyrgyzstan destroyed a group of militants at the border in the Ala-Buk District in the active phase of «Barrier – 2014»...

...according to the scenario, a shepherd noticed a group of armed people on the border...The border guard detachment's alarm was raised and reinforcements arrived along the border...The border guards coordinated with air support and landed at the site with two helicopters. A BMP was also used during the operation...Footage of the operation was recorded with an unmanned aerial vehicle.

...the units involved utilized modern weapons, and military and special equipment in the inventory of the Border Guards and the General Staff of the Armed Forces...the exercise was carried out jointly by the Border Guards Service of Kyrgyzstan and the OSCE Center in Bishkek...the exercise was observed by members of the Operational Border Group of the FSB of Russia in Kyrgyzstan.

Kazakhstan Takes Leading Role in SCO post-2014 Security

18 September 2014

“A major concern we all have is the situation in Ukraine... The only long-term solution to the problem is political dialogue and consensus.”

OE Watch Commentary: On 18 September the pro-government Astana Times website published an article discussing President Nursultan Nazarbayev’s activities and statements at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, one week earlier. The article emphasized Nazarbayev’s leadership role in influencing the agenda of the Summit. The issues that the article focused on provide insights into how Nazarbayev and his country view the security environment in Central Asia.

According the article, Nazarbayev first raised the issue of solving border conflicts between Central Asian states and recommended reducing the amount of armed troops in border regions to prevent conflict. He also recommended SCO member-states work to address food and water as factors in security in the region and that Kazakhstan establish a committee to serve a mediation mechanism on these issues. Both of these recommendations relate to intra-regional issues. This is likely in recognition of the fact that although militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan and possibly neighboring countries like Russia pose a threat to Central Asian countries and their sovereignty, it is the breakdown of internal order that would provide openings for such militants to enter the region and carry out attacks.

Based on Nazarbayev’s main statements at the SCO Summit, it appears likely that Kazakhstan will focus its military and foreign policy strategy at preserving peace among countries within Central Asia. It will also like play an active role in welcoming international organizations, including the SCO and possibly others such as NATO, to take part in addressing intra-regional challenges. For those problems outside of Central Asia, Kazakhstan will also likely encourage dialogue between countries in the region so as to avoid military force becoming a precedent in attempting to resolve resource and political conflicts, as has occurred in eastern Ukraine. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

Source: “President Addresses Pressing Issues During SCO Summit in Dushanbe,” Astana Times, September 18, 2014.

President Addresses Pressing Issues During SCO Summit in Dushanbe

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev attended the Sept. 12 summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. During the meeting, the Kazakh President pointed out issues he felt should be a priority for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization given the world’s current geopolitical and geo-economic realities.

One of the items he stressed is unresolved border issues between SCO member states. The President also noted that food security is an important area of economic cooperation for SCO member states. Such a perspective favors the reopening of Kazakhstan’s initiative to establish a mechanism to ensure food safety and approval of the relevant cooperation programmes,” he said.

Nazarbayev said that the conflict in Ukraine requires an immediate solution. “A major concern we all have is the situation in Ukraine. The scale of the impact of the crisis has long gone beyond the country. The situation in eastern Ukraine requires immediate action. The only long-term solution to the problem is political dialogue and consensus,” he said. In addition, Nazarbayev stressed that the problem of water scarcity is a major factor affecting stability and security in the region. In this regard, he said that the proposal of Kazakhstan to create a water committee could become a practical mechanism in cooperation on this issue.

The heads of state also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and Afghanistan. The only long-term solution to the problem is political dialogue and consensus,” Nazarbayev said. Also, Nazarbayev suggested the establishment of a constructive intra-Afghan dialogue to ensure stability in Afghanistan. In addition, the President of Kazakhstan pointed to the complexity of the current situation in the Middle East.

Nebulous Swiss Neutrality: Economic Sanctions Then and Now

OE Watch Commentary: *Given the economic sanctions imposed against Russia in the context of the Ukrainian crisis, the fact that the Swiss Federal Council, the executive council of the Swiss government, has decided not to enact sanctions poses a great challenge for Switzerland. The main question is how the evasion of sanctions via Switzerland can be prevented.*

The excerpted article is interesting in several ways. First, the guest commentary on sanctions is written by a former employee of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, giving the article greater force and credibility. Second, the author draws clear lessons for today from the Swiss experience with the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (COCOM) during the Cold War. Finally, the article, published in the major German newspaper in Switzerland, posits some quite direct advice for Swiss companies.

COCOM was founded in 1949 with the goal of compensating the numerical superiority of the troops of the Warsaw Pact with technological superiority. Measures, which were applied to not only the Soviet bloc, but also other countries, such as China, were put in place in order to control the export of arms, atomic energy and industrial goods that could be used for civilian and military purposes. Export permits for such goods were granted by the headquarters in Paris, and agreement by all members, that is, all NATO members (except for Iceland), Japan and Australia, was necessary for especially sensitive goods.

The article furthermore highlights the impact of American economic pressure on Switzerland. US delays of the export of essential technology, should Switzerland not comply with US requirements, confronted Switzerland with a dilemma. Due to its policy of neutrality, the author argues, Switzerland could not participate in the embargo, yet access to US technology was vital for the Swiss industry. According to the article, Switzerland conceded to the demands of the US by implementing two measures:

- *based on laws on emergency measures of the Swiss federal constitution, the Federal Council stopped the transit of controlled US goods to the Soviet bloc on request of the United States until a decree was passed in 1985 that prohibited such transits without approval of the country of origin;*
- *the Federal Council, while never enacting a decree, approached the Swiss Association of Machinery Manufacturers and asked them to contact exporters and convince them to refrain completely or in part from the export of sensitive goods, including four- and five-axle machine tools, as well as equipment for the semiconductor industry. The author emphasizes that since most of the CEOs of these firms were high-ranking and patriotic officers of the Swiss Army, this was not difficult to achieve.*

With these measures Switzerland was able to convince the US to grant Switzerland the same legal status as COCOM members with regard to controlled goods after 1986.

*The article concludes that that the European Union and the US will not allow the circumvention of the current sanctions, that past experience has proven that violations of the sanctions cannot be hidden from the US, and that the cost of such violations is very high. Most interestingly, the fact that the Federal Council approached the Swiss Association of Machinery Manufacturers is, while being described as more conflictual with the policy of neutrality, in fact directly reiterated. It is, according to the author, in the interest of the companies to comply with these sanctions. While already completed procurement contracts do not pose a problem for Swiss companies, the article adds the hindsight that the greatest danger derives from trade companies that might try to use the non-participation of Switzerland in the sanctions regime to increase their profits. **End OE Watch Commentary (Chadwick)***

Source: Othmar Wyss. "Wirtschaftssanktionen und Neutralität," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 08 August 2014. <http://www.nzz.ch/meinung/debatte/wirtschaftssanktionen-und-neutralitaet-1.18358833>

"On one hand, it (Switzerland) could not participate in the embargo due to its policy of neutrality, on the other hand, access to US technology was vital for its industry – most of all because its most important competitors in Germany would have received preferential treatment."

"The question asks itself whether something can be learned from the post-World War II era with regard to sanctions on commodities. Then too, Switzerland had to perform a balancing act in its foreign trade policy in light of export restrictions on strategic goods that the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (Cocom) maintained against the Soviet bloc from 1949 until the end of the Cold War."

"It is therefore in the interest of the companies themselves to comply with them (the sanctions)."

"Since the solution of Cocom 20 years have passed. Times have changed and tapping methods have improved again. The EU and the USA will not allow that sanctions are circumvented through Switzerland."

Croatia Welcomes US Mediation to Block Russian Influence

13 October 2014

“Any Russian involvement would be bad for Croatia.”

OE Watch Commentary: The Croatian national energy company INA (Industrija nafte) is owned, in part (44.84 percent of the shares), by the Croatian government, as well as by the Hungarian energy company MOL (Magyar Olaj, meaning “Hungarian Oil”), which owns 49.08 percent. In November 2013 MOL made a claim that Croatia broke an agreement regarding gas production which affected MOL’s investment in INA, resulting in a multimillion dollar loss to MOL.

The case is ongoing, but recently the US State Department offered to help mediate. This offer was welcomed by the Croatian government, though it has not yet been accepted. As explained in the article, this has more to do with influence in the region than settling the gas dispute itself. Croatia fears that Russia may stand behind the Hungarian company, hoping to capture a greater share of the Croatian gas market.

The comments of political analyst Davor Gjenero reflect a widespread negative view of Russia in Croatian politics. Russia’s reaching role in the region is not met with optimism in Croatia, as Russia’s actions are seen as self-interested, corrupting, and destructive to domestic politics. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**



INA gas station-Croatia. Source: www.ina.hr

Source: Milekic, Sven, “US Offers Mediation in Croatia-Hungary Dispute,” Balkan Insight, 13 October 2014. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/us-to-help-croatia-by-mediation>.

“Croatian Economy Minister Ivan Vrdoljak said on Sunday that Washington had offered to mediate in the long-running row between Zagreb and MOL over management rights in the Croatian national energy company, INA.

...Political analyst Davor Gjenero said that the US’s interest in mediating in the dispute was driven by fear of Moscow taking over part of INA, because MOL was planning to sell its share to Russian state-owned companies.

Gjenero argued that any Russian involvement would be bad for Croatia.

‘First of all, no investment coming from the Russian side in Croatia has not happened without being connected to corruption or getting something not specified in the contract. Secondly, Russian interest in the energy sector is exclusively geo-political and aimed at forming a monopoly that breaks the rules of a free market,’ he said.

Gjenero also argued that Russian involvement would be bad for INA itself.

‘They would run it in an inefficient and corrupted way, penetrating into local politics,’ commented Gjenero”.

Russia and Serbia: Friends with Stipulations

16 October 2014

“Serbia is grateful to Russia that it has respected that and that it has always protected Serbia’s sovereignty.”

OE Watch Commentary: This article regarding Vladimir Putin’s visit to Serbia demonstrates the complexity of the Russia-Serbia relationship. Putin’s visit was met with many celebrations, including Serbia’s first military parade since 1985, which included more than 3,000 soldiers. However, despite this warm embrace of the Russian leader, the Serbian leadership says it is still firmly on track to join the European Union.

Serbia refuses to implement sanctions on Russia in response to Russia’s conflict with Ukraine, and instead holds multiple economic agreements with Russia, including the latter’s newly announced imports of Serbian Fiats and cheese. Also, in thanking Russia for protecting Serbia’s sovereignty, Serbia is referring to Russia’s refusal to recognize Kosovo as an independent state, which is a significant obstacle in Serbia’s bid for European Union membership and an ongoing source of tension as Serbia and Kosovo move slowly toward normalizing relations.

Serbia and Russia also continue to work on their South Stream pipeline agreement, which will pipe Russian natural gas to Eastern Europe without traveling through Ukraine. In the article, Putin again noted Russia’s capacity to reduce the amount of gas available as they did to Ukraine in 2008-09. Serbia’s growing economic relationship with Russia in the face of Russia’s varied sanctions has been a great benefit to Serbia, and is one of Russia’s closest relationships of all the Balkan nations. **End OE Watch Commentary (Jackson)**



Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Serbian counterpart Tomislav Nikolic. Source: en.ria.ru

Source: Andric, Gordana, “Vucic Thanks Putin for Russia’s Friendship to Serbia,” Balkan Insight, 16 October 2014. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/putin-arrives-to-belgrade-s-lavishing-military-parade>.

“At a joint press conference with Putin, Vucic said he had ‘good news for the people of Serbia’ because Putin had agreed that Fiat cars produced in Serbia could be exported to Russia. Russia had also agreed to allow imports of Serbian cheese.

‘Serbia is on its way to the EU and it is not abandoning that path,’ Vucic said. ‘Serbia is grateful to Russia that it has respected that and that it has always protected Serbia’s sovereignty.’”

Missions and C2 Structure of New Russian 'Northern' Strategic Command Analyzed

“The creation of a unified grouping of spatially dispersed all-arms forces and an adequate system of their centralized command and control is clearly required in the Arctic.”

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying article discusses the command and control structure of Russia's future “Northern” Operational Strategic Command (OSK) that is planned to be operational by the end of the year (see the October 2014 OEW for additional details on this new command). Although the Northern OSK is considered a joint strategic command, it is apparent that the Northern OSK has fewer responsibilities than its sister commands (Western, Central, Eastern, Southern), and is essentially “last among equals.”

Unlike its sister commands, the Northern OSK will not be considered a military district. In 2010 there was a major overhaul of the Soviet/Russian military district system. Aside from condensing six military districts into four, their roles were changed. Prior to these reforms, operational and administrative control of most military units (Ground Forces, Air Force, etc.) generally lay with their respective branches of service in peacetime. The military district's responsibility was not the operational control of troops in the field, but rather garrisoning, training, rear area logistical support, preparation of civil defense organizations, pre-conscription training, and conduct of the biannual conscription boards.

The 2010 reform gave the military district commander operational control of most military Ministry of Defense forces in their respective regions, with the exception of all nuclear and certain strategic assets, such as the Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN), Airborne (VDV), and GRU spetsnaz units. At this time, the military districts were renamed “Operational Strategic Commands” (OSKs), although the term “military district” is still used when referring to the organization when it is involved with more mundane rear services activities.

Due to the periodic mention of military districts in official pronouncements and the very different missions of the OSKs and military districts, it is possible the military

Source: Konstantin Bogdanov, “Arctic Commanders: Why Russia Needs a Separate ‘Northern’ Command,” Lenta.ru Online, 3 October 2014, <http://lenta.ru/articles/2014/10/02/arctic/>, accessed 15 October 2014.

Arctic Commanders: Why Russia Needs a Separate ‘Northern’ Command

In the 21st century, the Arctic is being transformed into one of the key economic regions. Having announced the formation of the “Northern” Separate Operational-Strategic Command and about the formation of special arctic troops, Russia is making a bid for control over the subpolar sector, which is directly adjacent to the extensive and poorly equipped northern coast.

The Ministry of Defense has been displaying a spike of interest in the Arctic Region since the end of 2013. They are restoring the basing facilities and airfield on the Novosibirsk Islands. Exercises with an airborne assault landing were conducted in this area in March for the first time – the 98th Ivanovo Division's parachute battalion conducted the drop. The creation of a separate operational-strategic command in the Arctic was announced at that time.

Ground Troops Commander-in-Chief Colonel-General Oleg Salyukov reported the inclusion of two brigades in the composition of the arctic command, which has received the designation “Northern”. The first is the 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade at Kola's Pechenga, at which they have refined the methodology of equipping the arctic formations. In Salyukov's words, the second brigade will be deployed in Yamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous Okrug over the course of 2016. Arctic Command will receive special gear and special vehicles, in particular, two-section off-road transporters, snowmobiles, and air-cushioned ships

The activity of the Russian military personnel and their foreign colleagues in the Arctic zone will increase not for the first year due to an entire series of reasons – from politics to global climate change...

The forces-in-being do not correspond to the region's importance, which is additionally complicated by the specific nature of the theater of military operations. The creation of a unified grouping of spatially dispersed all-arms forces and an adequate system of their centralized command and control is clearly required in the Arctic.

The Masters of the North

In February 2014, TASS, while citing a source at the General Staff, reported that the new operational-strategic command in the Arctic, which Sergey Shoygu mentioned already in December 2013, will be deployed precisely based upon the Northern Fleet.

Experiments on the formation of all-arms groupings around a fleet base have been conducted in Russia for a long time. But previously they were primarily concerned with

(continued)

Continued: Missions and C2 Structure of New Russian 'Northern' Strategic Command Analyzed

district hierarchies were not completely subsumed by the OSKs. Instead, the military districts still exist, but are collocated at the same headquarters as their respective OSKs and are commanded by one four-star flag-level officer who is dual hatted for both commands.

*Although the Northern OSK may be the “last among equals,” in terms of its responsibilities compared to the other OSKs, Russia is making its intent clear that the Arctic is a high priority. The accompanying article mentions that the Northern OSK will be collocated with and based upon the Northern Fleet Headquarters. As the author notes, basing operational control of joint military forces on naval headquarters has been done several times since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but granting the Arctic command full OSK status (instead of some other structure of operational control) is now being done due to the size and strategic importance of the region to Russia. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

isolated territorial areas, which required the centralized command and control of the men and equipment on relatively compact remote patches of land.

So, the Kaliningrad Special Rayon, which merged all of the forces in the Kaliningrad enclave, emerged in 1994. The Grouping of Troops and Forces in the Northeast, which also merged the command and control of everything that existed on Kamchatka, was created based upon the Kamchatka Flotilla of All-Arms Forces in 1998. Based upon individual allusions, which were heard during the summer-fall of 2014, one can with caution arrive at the conclusion on the defense minister's intention to also create a similar command in the Crimea.

However, all of these decisions have been accomplished as carbon copies and concern limited, adequately densely packed regions from the point of view of military infrastructure. The notorious “Northern” OSK does not end up in this category either based upon the dimensions of the area of responsibility, the quantity of men and equipment, or the geographical dispersal of their basing areas. Russian military personnel will have to accomplish an extremely ambitious mission for the creation of a viable command and control system of the fleet's forces, air forces, ground troops, electronic warfare and aerospace defense troops, which are dispersed on several thousands of kilometers of the polar coast – from Pechenga to the Norwegian border to Wrangel Island that hangs out over Chukotka.

The Grouping's Complex Nature

The list of the future “Northern” Grouping's missions is extremely extensive: beginning from the defense of the economic interests on the Shelf and ending with defense from a possible attack with the use of strategic cruise missiles, which are launched from submarine or aircraft platforms in the Arctic zone. Russia's northern border that is lengthy and poorly equipped with air situation monitoring equipment requires special attention to the organization of the aerospace defense.

The long-standing mission of the formation of areas, which are closed to the penetration of enemy naval forces, where strategic submarines and missile-equipped aircraft are deployed in a threatened period (it is traditional to name them “bastions” in Western analysis), stands apart. The change of the sailing conditions in the Arctic additionally complicates the accomplishment of these missions. It is also interesting that fleet naval infantry formations and the newly created arctic brigades will live together and cooperate in the command's composition. The problem of the mobility of all of the men and equipment immediately emerges on an unequipped space of such scale. To what extent are the requirements being made to the arctic brigades for mobility within the theater of military operations and what equipment insures this? How will the coordination of the fleet's amphibious assault forces and Military Transport Aviation be carried out?

“Taking combat experience into consideration, special attention at the exercise is being given to issues of command and control, material and technical and medical support, intelligence, communications and radio electronic warfare. At a unified pace, without malfunctions, all of the troops and forces involved in the exercise, both the combat formations and units, as well as the support units, must operate in a synchronized manner...”

- Eastern Military District Commander, Colonel-General Sergey Surovikin

OE Watch Commentary: The Vostok-2014 exercises, held 11-18 September, showcased a variety of Russian military capabilities. Most media coverage focused on the high-profile units of the Russian Airborne (VDV), Naval Infantry, SPETSNAZ, and select motorized rifle brigades. The accompanying articles discuss the much less sexy, but just as important logistical side of the military equation. The exercises leveraged a large swath of Russia's military and civil logistic capabilities, including the Military Transport Agency (the proponent for commercial shipping within the Russian Armed Forces), Military Transport Aviation, naval forces, the Ministry of Transportation, the Federal Agency for State Reserves, open joint-stock companies, the Railroad Authority, the Highway Authority, and commercial shipping.

Perhaps, the most important logistical asset in the Russian toolbox is the nation's massive railroad system. Although the above-mentioned entities were all involved in varying degrees in supporting the logistics of the Vostok-2014 exercises, the vast majority of personnel, equipment, and logistical support were delivered via rail. Rail transport is the primary means of logistical support for most military operations (including current operations in and around Eastern Ukraine) and is an absolute necessity for any type of large-scale movement throughout the great expanse that is the Russian Federation. Due to the importance of rail for military operations, the Russian Federation has a separate branch, the railroad troops, dedicated to protecting, servicing, and maintaining rail service in combat and austere conditions for the Russian Armed Forces. They consist of ten brigades and several independent battalions scattered throughout the Russian Federation which are operationally attached to their respective military districts. The accompanying articles discuss efforts by the 7th Separate Railroad Brigade, 50th Separate

Source: Viktor Khudoleyev, “Support Troops Deserves Special Attention,” Krasnaya Zvezda (Online), 16 September 2014, <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/daty/item/18632-obespecheniyu-vojsk-osoboe-vnimanie>, accessed 8 October 2014.

Support Troops Deserves Special Attention

On the threshold of the main maneuvers of the year, the strategic command-staff exercise Vostok-2014, a huge special exercise of the material and technical support system was held over the course of a week in the Far East under the leadership of Russian Federation Deputy Minister of Defense, General of the Army Dmitriy Bulgakov.

One of its most important elements was the practical development of issues pertaining to mass shipments of equipment by railroad, aviation and sea transportation. And this is not surprising, considering contemporary trends in the development of the Armed Forces and the course of military conflicts of the last decades...

The forces and assets of all of the services of the RF Armed Forces and the combat arms based on the territory of the Eastern Military District were engaged in the “rear” maneuvers. The number of engaged formations and units of the Material-Technical Support system (MTO) {Combat Service and Combat Service Support} exceeded 3,500 individuals and more than 2,000 pieces of equipment were used.

“Engaged in the exercise were not only the MTO formations and units, but also the so-called {rear} support troops, both the combined arms formations, as well as aviation and naval units. The goal was to practice all of the issues associated with the organizational and manning structure of the formations, units and organizations of the MTO system,” noted the Deputy Minister of Defense. “In addition to the approximately 20 formations, units and organizations that belong to the Eastern Military District's MTO system, federal executive agencies were engaged: The Ministry of Transportation, The Federal Agency for State Reserves, Open Joint-Stock Companies, The Railroad Authority, and Road Authority...”

The most interesting and spectacular sights were the installation across the Burey River of an NZhM-56 floating railroad bridge (designed for wide and deep water obstacles) with a cargo capacity of 56 tons and the erecting of a two-lane crossing of the Slavyanka River using the regulation SARM-M modernized medium, vehicle road collapsible bridge system (for rapidly erecting new and restoring destroyed high bridges on military roads)...

On the concluding day, in the waters of Peter the Great Bay near Vladivostok, tasks involving material and technical support of ships and vessels at sea were practiced. These

(continued)

Continued: Russian Strategic Mobility Highlighted in Vostok-2014 Exercises

Railroad Brigade, and 118th Pontoon-Bridging Battalion (rail) to provide logistical support for the exercises, to include repair, bridge building, and concealment. End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

included practical operations in at-sea, underway refueling of the ships by tankers using the over-the-stern and transverse methods; extinguishing a fire on board one of the ships; towing of a vessel in distress; and rescuing people from the water. In addition, 18 units of equipment of the separate naval infantry brigade were loaded on a crane ship using the Shore-to-Floating object-to-Ship method, and the Large Landing Ship Admiral Nevelskoy took on board from the shore of Desantnaya Bay 12 pieces of equipment and the naval infantrymen themselves comprising a landing-assault company...

“The 7th and 50th Separate Railroad Brigades practiced tasks supporting the redeployment of railroad units and automotive equipment across the vast Far East rivers in Khabarovsk Kray and the Amur and Jewish Autonomous Oblasts, it has been more than four centuries since the Far Easterners have encountered such practical tasks.”

- Russian Railroad Troop Brigade Commander

Source: Oleg Surovtsev, "A Construction Project for the Railroad Troops," Suvorovskiy Natisk (Online), 27 September 2014, <http://www.redstar.ru/images/files/regions2014/2709/270914-suv-na.pdf, accessed 8 October 2014.

A Construction Project for the Railroad Troops

During the strategic command staff exercise Vostok-2014 the {7th and 50th Separate Railroad Brigades} commanded by Colonel Vitaliy Klimovich and Igor Golygin practiced tasks supporting the redeployment of railroad units and automotive equipment across the vast Far East rivers in Khabarovsk Kray and the Amur and Jewish Autonomous Oblasts. In the words of the officers of the Eastern Military District Railroad Troops Directorate, it has been more than four centuries since the Far Easterners have encountered such practical tasks.

The railroad troops commanded by Colonel Vitaliy Klimovich erected the bridge across the Burey River (next to the railroad station of the same name) as early as the first days of September during the large-scale exercise of the Material and Technical Support (MTO) systems of the Eastern Military District. A crossing 438.5 meters in length connected the Arkharinskiy and Bureyskiy rayons. In the course of the large-scale work about 250 tons of various fillings were removed and the length of the railroad spur laid by the servicemen was more than two kilometers.

The first to pass over the pontoon bridge laid over the rapidly-flowing and wide river was a railroad convoy of 30 platform cars carrying the weapons and military equipment of a guards motorized infantry brigade (tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, air defense missile systems). It was followed by a passenger train. According to the chief of the Production Department of the VVO Railroad Troops Directorate, Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Puchkov, the 88 pontoons on the Burey River could replace any stationary bridge for a minimum of several months...

Of course, in such work not only the design capabilities of the bridge, but also the professional training of the specialists, have great significance. Andrey Petrovich noted that almost 75 percent of the personnel of the battalion were drafted servicemen. However, the process of training the personnel was well thought out and organized. For example, the mechanics operating the universal pile driving equipment, and the drivers of the tractors and the BMK tug boats are trained at special training centers of the railroad troops. These specialists are assigned to formations based on applications...

But, as one might expect, the most critical work during Vostok-2014 was entrusted to the staffs. The high command of the separate railroad brigades prepared for the execution of designated tasks at any point of the Far East. As is well known, if necessary a crossing must be protected by aerosol screens and allied aviation and the enemy's attention must be distracted by false bridges. Therefore, the corresponding maneuvers are practiced with the leadership of NBC brigades, engineering brigades and the Air Force and air defense joint commands.

SPETSNAZ Selection and Training

17 August 2014

“Under the guidance of SPETSNAZ veterans, the soldiers-to-be practiced the elements of reconnaissance activities, setting up an ambush, camouflage, and hand-to-hand and knife-fighting techniques, and carried out exercises in the use of small arms, and also did an airborne training course, each making three parachute jumps from a height of 800 meters.”

OE Watch Commentary: In the West the terms “spetsnaz” (spetsial’nego naznacheniya) and “special operations forces” (sil spetsialnykh operatsiy) are used as synonyms. In the Russian military system all special operations forces are spetsnaz, but not all spetsnaz are special operations forces. The word spetsnaz (спецназ) is a Russian abbreviation of the words spetsial’nego naznacheniya (специального назначения), a term which can roughly be translated as “special designation,” referring to troops with a special purpose. The word “special” is used in a very broad way that can indicate that the unit has a very narrow area of specialization, such as signals intelligence, engineering, reconnaissance, etc.; or the unit is experimental or temporary in nature; or the unit conducts tasks of special importance, such as sensitive political or clandestine operations. This broad usage of the term means that “spetsnaz” cannot be thought of as equating to the Western concept of special operations forces (SOF).

There are many units in Russia’s armed forces and militarized internal security and intelligence units with the designation of “spetsnaz,” but when the term is used in reference to the Armed Forces of the Ministry of Defense, it typically refers to the troops serving in any of Russia’s seven GRU Spetsnaz brigades, the Navy combat swimmers, or the Airborne’s (VDV) 45th Spetsnaz Regiment. These are some of Russia’s best military units, along with the rest of the VDV, and can be thought of as true “snake eaters.” The Spetsnaz brigades are the most numerous of these forces, functioning as the eyes and ears of the general staff, having the capability to perform deep reconnaissance and conduct direct action missions behind enemy lines.

Although Russian Spetsnaz units are elite units and now conduct many of the same missions that Western SOF carry out, there are significant differences between the organizations. In general, the GRU Spetsnaz are not intended to act independently. They are seen as an elite force that performs missions (reconnaissance, direct action, etc.) to further the movement and maneuver of the rest of the conventional Armed Forces. In short, Russian Spetsnaz brigades are doctrinally and logistically bound to the Armed Forces, and are not intended for the independent operations that Western SOF conduct. In 2013 Russia announced the creation of Special Operations Command (Komandovanie

Source: “Future Special-Purpose Troops First to Undergo Mountain Training Course,” Ministry of Defense of the Russian (Online), 17 September 2014, http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11984363@egNews, accessed 8 October 2014.

Future Special-Purpose Troops First to Undergo Mountain Training Course

A group of youngsters of pre-conscript age have climbed to the top of a ridge more than 2,500 meters above sea level in the mountains of Karachay-Cherkessia in the framework of an experimental basic military training course to prepare young people for service in Southern Military District SPETSNAZ units.

The basic mountain training course previously was held for a week under the leadership of personnel of reconnaissance units of a Southern Military District mountain motorized rifle brigade.

During the course, the soldiers-to-be acquired survival and safety skills in the mountains in low-oxygen conditions, learned the basics of using mountain gear and equipment, organizing belays in various forms of relief, working out their location in the mountains, determining heights and distances, learning to navigate the terrain by map, and moving by bearings.

Also, when crossing rivers using a variety of means the youngsters learned how to determine the current flow, channel width, depth, and nature of the riverbed.

Before the mountain training course, two-week classes in special tactical, fire, engineering, mine explosives, and military topography were conducted with the applicants at the Prudboy training ground in Volgograd oblast.

Under the guidance of SPETSNAZ veterans, the soldiers-to-be practiced the elements of reconnaissance activities, setting up an ambush, camouflage, and hand-to-hand and knife-fighting techniques, and carried out exercises in the use of small arms, and also did an airborne training course, each making three parachute jumps from a height of 800 meters.

During the forthcoming autumn conscription campaign the trained conscripts will be assigned to service in Southern Military District SPETSNAZ formations and units.

Continued: SPETSNAZ Selection and Training

Sil Spetsialnykh Operatsiy) within the Russian General Staff; presumably this new command has received the cream of the crop of personnel from the Spetsnaz and VDV and performs missions similar to Western SOF.

*The accompanying article discusses pre-conscript training for those intending to serve in a spetsnaz unit (likely in the 10th Spetsnaz Brigade (Krasnodar), 22th Spetsnaz Brigade (Rostov-On-The-Don), or 25th Spetsnaz Regiment (Stavropol)). In the Russian system conscripts are typically assigned to units from the regions from which they are conscripted. This staffing practice was done for purposes of mass mobilization, as conscripts who have finished their training would be recalled to the posts in which they had served. In practice, this means that proximity, and not just ability, determines conscript staffing in Spetsnaz units. Russia does enjoy a somewhat sophisticated draft system that includes representatives from the police, intelligence services, and even the conscript's high school, who can provide the draft officer with relevant information on the conscript, in order to assign him in the most favorable way possible for the State (smart conscripts are placed in the rocket forces, physically fit in the airborne, multilingual in signals-intelligence, etc.). The draft board also has a representative from the Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet (DOSAAF). DOSAAF is a government-sponsored sports and outdoor enthusiast organization that promotes militarily useful skills, such as hiking, camping, shooting, skiing, parachuting, driving, and athletics, for young people. DOSAAF is not specifically mentioned in this article, but it is likely that it facilitated this event, and that the future conscripts' aptitudes were being assessed for future placement in the Russian Armed Forces during the event. In sum, although Spetsnaz units have conscripts, these conscripts often arrive at their units far better trained than their Western counterparts. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)***

Russia's Strategic Mobility

Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020?

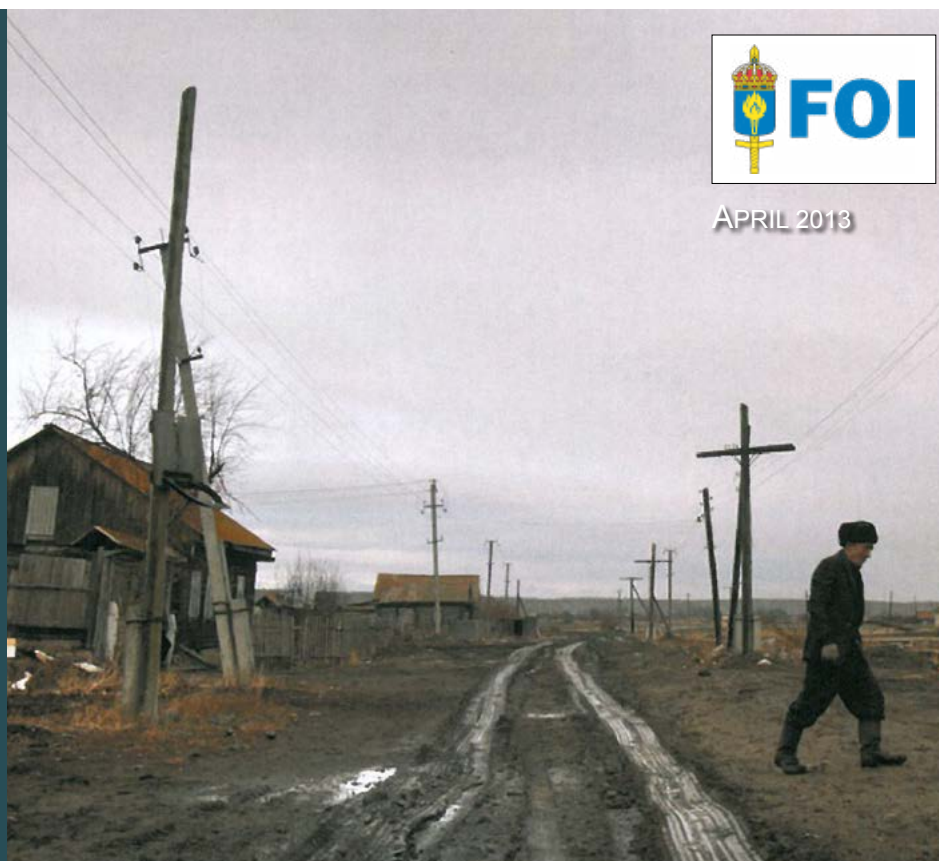
By Roger N. McDermott

http://www.foi.se/ReportFiles/foir_3587.pdf

Roger N. McDermott's Russia's Strategic Mobility: Supporting 'Hard Power' to 2020? examines the rapidly changing Russian military's strategic capabilities for logistics, combat service support, and force projection. McDermott's work for The Russia Studies Programme of the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) sheds light on the unglamorous, but vitally important logistic backbone upon which the Russian military relies. Roger N. McDermott is a Senior International Fellow for the Foreign Military Studies Office.



APRIL 2013



Veracity of Russian Claims to Renew Nuclear Arsenal Questioned

6 October 2014

“Russia’s land based missiles lie in two organizations. The Russian Ground Forces operates rocket brigades which are armed (or soon to be armed) with the nuclear capable Iskander theater ballistic missile.(500 km range) Russia’s mobile and silo based intercontinental ballistic missiles are operated by Rocket Armies in the Strategic Rocket Forces (RSVN). Both organizations have seen an influx of new equipment as Russia retires older Tochka (Ground Forces) and Topol (RVSN) missiles with the newer Iskander and Yars missiles.”

OE Watch Commentary: Modernizing Russia’s nuclear arsenal has long been a top national priority, but statements from Russian President Vladimir Putin about modernizing the nuclear arsenal and developments that will “excite our partners[opponents]” have brought the issue front and center. Later, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin stated that “by 2020 Russia will completely renew the inventory of strategic nuclear forces,” raising some eyebrows. As the accompanying articles discuss, the problem of modernizing Russia’s nuclear weapons is not with the warheads, but with the missiles. Russia has had many high-profile launch failures with its space program over the last few years and has had difficulty with its submarine-based Bulava missiles. The pundits in the accompanying articles speculate that completely renewing Russia’s nuclear arsenal will be difficult, if not impossible, given the current state of the Russian missile industry, especially since this industry may be cut off from Western components on which it may depend.

The authors of these articles also mention the troubling Russian national sentiment that is developing towards the use of force in general, and threat of nuclear arms in particular, to thwart U.S./Western influence. There is a popular Russian narrative propagated by the omnipresent Russian media that the current crisis in Ukraine is due solely to US/Western meddling, with the overall intent of weakening Russia. In this narrative the Russian Armed Forces are perceived to be an effective counter to Western influence, sanctions, and general meddling of

Source: Oleg Vladykin, “Dmitriy Rogozin to Strengthen the Nuclear Shield,” Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Online), 23 September 2014, http://www.ng.ru/armies/2014-09-23/1_rogozin.html, accessed 8 October 2014

Dmitriy Rogozin to Strengthen the Nuclear Shield

By 2020 Russia will completely renew the inventory of strategic nuclear forces, not by 70 percent as is now being proposed, but by the entire 100 percent. This was stated by Vice Premier Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees the country’s defense industrial complex, in a broadcast on the Rossiya 24 television channel...

Nezavisimaya Gazeta asked Ruslan Pukhov, Director of the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, to comment on this subject. “It is necessary to think about this and to understand where we could find such renewals in such compressed schedules,” the expert considered. “In the first place, the Soviet legacy, of course, is very great. Many advanced developments were stopped at the beginning of the 1990’s. After all, at the end of the 1980’s the money simply ran out. Therefore, now all of this can be easily restored. In the second place, in contrast to conventional weaponry, even in the confused times of Yeltsin the nuclear complex was financed as a priority item. That is, the Army was reduced several-fold, but money was allocated nonetheless to the support and augmentation of the Russian nuclear arsenal. Well, and in the third place, the current Russian political authorities have finally understood that given the enormous unbalance in arms between the Western countries and us, the only means guaranteeing our sovereignty and preventing a regime change along the Slobodan Milosevich model is the presence of a powerful nuclear capability. So Putin has, in fact, placed a nuclear pistol on the table and has told the partners: ‘Take it whoever dares, but only from my dead hands’”...

As far as the feasibility of this task is concerned, in Pukhov’s opinion, the main problem lies not in the nuclear warheads themselves, but in the means of their delivery, in the new launch vehicles. We are now planning to make a new heavy, liquid-fueled missile to replace the legendary Voyevoda ICBM {SS-18 Satan}. Will they be able to make it at the State Missile Center, which has been long neglected by the state in comparison with the Moscow Institute of Thermal Engineering? After all, it was the Makeyev personnel who were tasked with the development of the new heavy missile. “At our Votkinsk plant we mainly made missiles, the Iskander, the Topol, and the Yars,” recalled Pukhov. “And two-thirds of the machine tool inventory there is of Western manufacture. And due to these sanctions, should we knock these machine tools out of alignment during their servicing, we would absolutely be unable to make the missiles in the necessary quantities and within the necessary schedules...”

(continued)

Continued: Veracity of Russian Claims to Renew Nuclear Arsenal Questioned

“Sanctions? My Iskander [missile system] laughs at sanctions.”

Source: Alexander Golts, “Russia’s Nuclear Euphoria Ignores Reality,” The Moscow Times Online, 6 October 2014, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/russia-s-nuclear-euphoria-ignores-reality/508499.html>, accessed 8 October 2014.

all things Russian (including Ukraine). In practice, this narrative has manifested itself into popular pro-military and anti-Western themes such as “Polite People” (a reference to the masked unmarked Russian military forces participating in the Crimea invasion) and numerous T-Shirts that tout Russian wherewithal to oppose US/Western sanctions by depicting various nuclear-capable missile launchers with slogans such as: “Sanctions? My Iskander laughs at sanctions.” Prominent Russian military commentator Alexander Golts points out that even in Soviet times at the height of the Cold War, the attitude toward nuclear weapons was never so glib.
End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)

Russia’s Nuclear Euphoria Ignores Reality

Muscovites are staging a campaign against Western sanctions called: “Fighting sanctions with fashion.” Participants trade in their old T-shirts with Western slogans for new shirts bearing such inscriptions as: “Sanctions? My Iskander laughs at sanctions,” or “The Topol couldn’t care less about sanctions” — references to Russia’s Iskander and Topol ballistic missiles...

I must say that even Soviet propagandists never allowed themselves to speak so flippantly about the prospect of nuclear war. They only referred to that possibility within the context of deterring US nuclear aggression. It seems that a sort of nuclear euphoria is sweeping the country. Whereas we might expect such comments from Kremlin spin doctors whipping up anti-Western hysteria, now even senior officials have joined the nuclear bandwagon in all earnestness. Dmitry Rogozin, the deputy prime minister charged with overseeing the defense industry, recently made the sensational statement that Russia would completely renew its nuclear forces by 2020.

If true, it means leaders have just six years to retire and replace 52 SS-18 missiles, which NATO calls “Satan” missiles, 40 SS-19 missiles and 108 SS-25 missiles, which are the old, increasingly obsolete Topol missiles.

The Russian navy would also have to completely replace seven of its Delta III, Delta IV and Typhoon-class nuclear submarines. The air force would have to scrap and replace all its nuclear bombers, the “youngest” of which have already served for 25 years...

Here the problem concerns not only the number of missiles, but also the number of warheads that each carries. Every SS-18 carries 10 warheads, every SS-19 has six, and each of the old Topol missiles carries one warhead apiece. If the military retires all of those missiles, it would reduce Russia’s nuclear capacity by 988 warheads, or two-thirds of its total nuclear potential.

The new Yars missiles carry just four warheads each — too few to fully compensate for such a reduction. Therefore, Moscow has placed all its hopes on the new Sarmat missile, which sources say is designed to carry 10 warheads.

There is just one hitch: The Sarmat is still in the design-and-development phase, and officials expect its completion no sooner than 2018. Bear in mind also that Russia has no experience developing heavy-lift missiles: Ukraine produced them during the Soviet period at facilities in Dnipropetrovsk...

Western sanctions will also have an impact. Now, Russia will have to first manufacture the necessary machinery needed to even begin production of the new missiles.

All of that makes the complete modernization of Russia’s nuclear forces by 2020 an illusory dream. Rogozin is either telling a deliberate lie or does not understand the reality of the situation. But, of course, who pays any attention to such trifling details when the country is gripped by nuclear euphoria?



“Sanctions? My Iskander laughs at sanctions.”

Source: http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-ICfM0f5AZ6M/VCKEB_A8gFI/AAAAAAAAACUY/mlpF2gWPTEQ/s1600/1401176.jpg

Russian Reactions to Government Internet Control

3 October 2014

“The doors of hell are locked from the inside”

OE Watch Commentary: On 1 October 2014 Russian President Vladimir Putin presided over a meeting at the Russian National Security Council. During the meeting, which focused on Internet security in the country, Putin discussed a plan to separate the Internet in Russia from the rest of the world. The plan entails a backup system to keep Internet sites in Russian domains in a national emergency.

Putin said the government is not considering censoring the Internet and emphasized external security threats to Russia. “We see that other countries try to use their dominant position in the global information space for reaching not only economic, but political-military aims... In the global internet materials of terrorist and extremist inclination are openly distributed,” said Putin, noting also the growth of cyber-attacks in Russia. This statement comes in the context of what Western and Russian experts have generally described in recent months as increased government control of the Internet in Russia.

The accompanying excerpts present a range of reactions from the Russian public, especially among media representatives, to the 1 October meeting and more broadly to recent trends in Internet control in Russia. The first is an opinion by author Igor Tsukanov in business-oriented Vedomosti. He agrees with Putin that certain Internet sites spread dangerous extremist ideology and child pornography. Yet he finds less credible the assertion that danger to Russia comes from the outside. He writes, “It seems there are no examples of Internet access of a country being blocked from the outside.” He then quotes writer Clive Staples Lewis, “The doors of hell are locked from the inside” – a thinly-disguised commentary on Russia.

The second excerpt is from Russian TV show host, journalist and activist Maksim Kononenko in Vesti.ru. He writes that while the Russian public had feared the worst outcome of the 1 October meeting, given what he describes as overall repressive climate in the country, to the contrary, “it became clear that no change for the worse so far is foreseen. No one so far is planning to turn off the Internet.” According to Kononenko, this is because the technical aspects of Russian Internet connectivity are, in reality, too complex. Indeed, according to Kononenko, experts—unlike the general public—have known this for a while and therefore are less concerned than the public.

Source: Igor Tsukanov, “От каких врагов надо защищать интернет?”

Примеров блокирования интернет-доступа той или иной стране извне, кажется, нет” (From what enemies should the Internet be defended? It seems there are no examples of blocking Internet access to one country or another from the outside), 3 October 2014. Читайте далее: <http://www.vedomosti.ru/opinion/news/34220271/internet-kabel#ixzz3F6HIWhiZ>

...On the one hand, Putin and his assistant Igor Shchegolev, and Minister of Communications Nikolai Nikiforov reassured: there is no topic of cutting Russian citizens from the global network on the agenda. On the other hand, these same officials say it is necessary that RuNet [Russian language Internet] be prepared for destructive influences from outside...

...It is clear that a state should have reserve channels for exchanging communications and care for their safety. Putin is right also— individual sites spin propaganda of terrorism and extremism, xenophobia and religious hatred, and some sites carry child pornography. But with each new legislative initiative on the substitution of something foreign - food, servers, software, platforms for drilling, foreign presence in the media – it is less and less believable that they [the authorities] began discussion about autonomous Internet “just in case.” Especially since it seems there are no examples of Internet access of a country being blocked from the outside. “The doors of hell are locked from the inside,” wrote Christian writer Clive Staples Lewis...

Source: “Интернет и госбезопасность. Реплика Максима Кононенко” (Internet and state security. Maksim Kononenko’s response) , Vesti.ru, 2 October 2014 <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2015209>

..The public was waiting for [October 1 Russian National Security Council Meeting] with fear – what the state Duma has been doing with the Internet in the last couple of years leads only to assume the worst...

Yet from the President’s speech at the Security Council, it became clear that no change for the worse so far is foreseen. No one so far is planning to turn off the Internet. On the contrary - the state, it seems, for the first time at such a high level, declared the importance of reliable operation of the Internet for public safety.

In contrast to the public, specialists were not surprised by the outcome of such a seemingly dangerous meeting. Because for any specialist it has long been clear—there are two aspects of the problem. If the first aspect, namely – the exciting fight of the deputies with objectionable content, in general, is clear, then the second— physical connectivity of the Russian web – is a bit more complicated to understand...

(continued)

Continued: Russian Reactions to Government Internet Control

The final excerpt is from blogger Anton Nossik, posted in Besttoday.ru, which aggregates top Russian blog entries. Nossik also had a long career as a journalist, and some in the Russian media have described him as one of the “fathers” of RuNet [Russian language Internet]. Nossik posted his blog shortly before the 1 October meeting, yet in it he discusses specifically the possibility of turning off the Internet. “Don’t believe the experts,” he writes, asserting that it is very easy from a technical standpoint to turn off the Internet in Russia should there be political will to do so.

Yet, for Nossik, the real issue is that the sheer volume of information millions of Russians exchange within the country’s borders is too massive to effectively monitor and control, and therefore, at this stage, free exchanges of information will continue. The logical conclusion then, according to Nossik, is that the current steps taken by the Russian government are only “penultimate,” in what he feels is a plan to ban completely access to public telecommunication networks.

Together, these three opinions show that the Russian public is generally concerned, to one degree or another, about Internet control as the Russian government is currently pursuing. Yet they also show that the public disagrees on of how far this control can realistically go, and continues to actively discuss this topic in the media. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: Anton Nossik, “Отключение Интернета в России: пошаговая инструкция” (Turning off the Internet in Russia: step by step instructions), BestToday.ru, 19 September 2014. <http://www.besttoday.ru/subjects/2090.html>

...There is no technical problem [with turning off the Internet], do not believe experts who claim that it is so incredibly difficult...In fact, all the main channels connecting Russia with the outside world are the property of operators, operating under license from the Communications Ministry. Violation of license terms entails its review and providing Internet access without a license is a criminal offense punishable under Article 171 of the Criminal Code...Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had managed the task of turning off the Internet across the country in one day, and his Syrian counterpart, too, as I recall, had not blundered...

[There are] 75 million users within the perimeter of the virtual barbed wire - who can control all their thoughts, sayings, expressions?! There will still be free exchange of information, uncontrollable by secret services simply due to its sheer volume. In the Soviet Union no “internal Internet” could not exist, and in North Korea it does not exist.

So the step of cutting off external main channels connecting Russia with the outside world—while a natural continuation of the state policy of the last two years, is not the last phase of the authorities’ struggle with the Internet, but only the penultimate. The logical conclusion of this fight should be a complete ban on the access of Russia’s citizens to public telecommunication networks....

How Do Belarusians Perceive Democracy?

By Alena Daneika, Wider Europe

“Pollsters conclude that Belarusian authorities rely on citizens being passive, and not active.”

<http://FMSO.leavenworth.army.mil/International.html>



Armenia's Decline and the Role of Russia's Custom's Union

12 October 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 1 October UN Population Fund Yerevan representative Garik Ayrapetyan announced that Armenia's rapidly aging population is reaching dangerous levels, declaring that if nothing changes, in 2050 one-third of the population will consist of individuals older than 65 year. Ayrapetyan's announcement therefore does not come as a surprise, since analysts have been noting Armenia's poor demographic situation for years. Yet the announcement also immediately struck another theme that has been dominating discussion among experts and the general public in Armenia in recent months: Armenia's joining the Russia-led Customs Union. The two issues are related because Armenia's demographic decline is closely tied to its economic decline. This may be perhaps the most important issue facing the country today.

The first accompanying excerpt, from Haqqin.az, is a reaction to Ayrapetyan's announcement by E. Mamedov. Mamedov believes Armenia's government is unable to resolve Armenia's current demographic crisis, and joining the Customs Union will only make things worse for Armenia's economy. In his view, the Russian ruble continues to fall, but Russia is a strong country that can handle it. Armenia's dram, on the other hand, has a weak country behind it; since the dram is now tied to the ruble through the Customs Union, it is therefore also falling.

The second excerpt is from an interview with political scientist and Caucasus Institute Director Aleksandr Iskandaryan, who adds a different dimension to analysis of the Customs Union. He discusses the general public's perceptions of the Customs Union. Putting other issues aside, in his view, the main issue with the Customs Union is that the public simply does not understand clearly what membership in it truly entails for Armenia. In his view, for the general public, Russia is a "guarantor of something," and this is important because Armenians have many ties with Russia, and many associate Russia with security, whether military or economic.

Iskandaryan also makes an interesting observation: latest opinion polls show that approximately 70% of Armenians support joining the Customs Union, while in September 2013, when Armenia was about to initial the Association Agreement with the European Union, about 60% were in favor of this latter decision. No polls asked Armenians to choose between the two options. This reflects the confusion among the public Iskandaryan perceives, an important context to keep in mind when assessing the public's level of support for its government's policies.

Since Armenia declared independence in 1993, approximately a third of the country's population has left, according to some estimates. Armenia's poor economy had forced over the years more and more citizens to leave for better job prospects. The poor economic situation also negatively influences family-planning decisions. Together, these trends contributed significantly to Armenia's population decline. Meanwhile,

Source: E. Mamedov, "ООН предвещает коллапс Армении (наша аналитика) ("UN Forecasts Armenia's Collapse (Our Analysis))," Haqqin.Az, 12 October 2014. <http://haqqin.az/news/31792>

..But the Armenian government cannot resolve this [Armenia's social problems], and in the short term, nothing portends improve this situation. The government cannot even cope with less ambitious socio-economic problems ... the government of President Serzh Sargsyan, passing all of the country's ruling reigns to the Kremlin, live only in the hopes of some handouts from numerous diaspora and aid from Russia.

But hoping today for Russia's help is ... at best silly, and it can create even more troubles for the country. Suffice to say that...the Armenian dram behaves exactly the same as the ruble, which is steadily falling down. But a powerful country stands behind the ruble, which can confidently be described as Moscow's political victim of Moscow, while behind the dram stands a poor country, which sacrificed itself to this same Moscow....

Source: "Искандарян: Армении нужна Россия, а России - Армения (Iskandaryan: Armenia Needs Russia, and Russia—Needs Armenia)" RIA Novosti, 7 October 2014. <http://ria.ru/interview/20141007/1027222625.html#ixzz3G36XgpUK>

- The main thing in this public opinion is that the society does not understand very clearly what is being discussed. Now according to opinion polls, about 70% are in favor of Armenia joining the Customs Union/Eurasian Union. But until 3 September 2013 there were other polls, and about 60% then were in favor Armenia concluding the Association Agreement with Europe. There were no polls of "are you for this or for that?"

The public does not understand clearly what is what the CU (EEU) [Customs Union/Eurasian Economic Union]. The public perceives it as a union as a whole, "to be with Russia" to be within the coordinates within which Armenia is already located. And with Russia we have a lot of connections...

People also have rational considerations. Russia – this is security, Russia – this is energy, economy. But I do not think (empirically, of course, I have no survey data), that this occupies the central part [of thinking]. The central part, rather, is a general idea of Russia as a country, which is the guarantor of something...

(continued)

Continued: Armenia's Decline and the Role of Russia's Custom's Union

*Armenia's ties with Russia have remained very strong economically, militarily, and culturally. At the same time, thousands reportedly even came out to protest joining the Customs Union this month, which speaks to divisions within the Armenian society. The discussion about the Customs Union, how it is tied to Armenia's economic and demographic trends, and what this bodes for Armenia's political future remains important to watch. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)***

A Central Asian Perspective of Security in Afghanistan

By Matthew Stein

In the ten years since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) contributed support for International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations by granting over-flight rights and use of airfields for transit or search and rescue operations, and allowing overland logistics of non-lethal supplies. The drawdown of forces in 2014 from Afghanistan will affect the conduct of regional affairs and regional security, particularly for the countries of Central Asia.

However, Central Asian perspectives of the future of Afghanistan are often overlooked. There are a number of articles by security analysts and academics in Central Asia that offer detailed and candid perspectives of ISAF operations and security in Afghanistan, though these may not be noticed or well received by policy-makers in the United States. A brief examination of articles by one such author,

Dr. Viktor Dubovitsky, can help better understand the Central Asian perspective of security in Afghanistan.



<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/CA-Perspective-of-Security-in-Afghanistan.pdf>

Regional Study Finds Chechnya Peaceful, Predicts Radicalization in Crimea

6 October 2014

OE Watch Commentary: On 6 October Russia's liberal Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Independent Newspaper) published a report on a recent study by Russia's Center for the Study of Ethnic Conflicts (CSEC). Among the study's major findings is that the Crimean Republic may soon see the rise of religious extremism, while Chechnya, by comparison, is among the more peaceful regions.

CSEC, by its own description, is an independent Russian research organization founded in 2013. It monitors and analyzes interethnic and interreligious conflicts in Russia and in the world. CSEC sees among its chief goals to foster "effective public national policies and to minimize inter-ethnic tensions in Russia."

According to the accompanying excerpt, CSEC had based its study on interviews with 70 experts, political scientists, human rights activists, journalists and law enforcement officials. The researchers also put their findings into an online map of ethnic tensions in Russia's regions. The study looked at the levels of tensions within Russia's regions between April and September 2014.

The study places Crimea as one among the top most "ethnically tense" regions in Russia, along with Moscow, Tatarstan, St. Petersburg, and several others. Chechnya, by contrast, was among the "most tolerant." These findings are consistent with previous reports in recent years. Indeed, Tatarstan, in particular, has seen a rise of radical Islamist activity in recent years, while Chechnya has been far more peaceful by comparison. Some analysts have also raised the possibility of radicalization in Crimea following Russia's annexation of this peninsula in March 2014.

Crimean Tatars are Sunni Muslims of Turkic origin who have lived in Crimea for centuries. In May 1944 Joseph Stalin deported their entire population from Crimea, under the pretext of Nazi collaboration. According to some estimates, as many as 40% of Crimean Tatars died in the course of horrific deportations. The Soviet government allowed the survivors to return to their homeland in 1989. In 1991 Crimean Tatars founded the Mejlis, a self-governing body, to represent them. For Crimean Tatars, Crimea's annexation brought back their most painful memories. Not surprisingly, the majority opposed Russia's annexation.

CSEC specialists foresee a gradual marginalization of the Mejlis. As this happens, they predict some of its members will grow increasingly radicalized and the organization will change into a religious extremist one. The situation on the ground may be ripe for such a scenario. Since the annexation Crimean Tatars and some observers have reported ill treatment by pro-Russian Crimean authorities. Some examples include the ban of certain Islamic literature, which the previous Ukrainian law deemed legal, closings of libraries, and labeling of Mejlis chairman Refat Chubarov as "extremist" while banning him from entering Crimea for five years. Indeed, according to some reports, Crimean Tatar jihadists have recently taken part in the fighting in Syria. In this context, Crimea may indeed see a rise of radical extremism. If this happens, the North Caucasus will no longer be the only hot-spot in Russia when it comes to radical activity. **End OE Watch Commentary (Borshchevskaya)**

Source: Kseniya Baranova, "Чечня толерантнее Крыма. Центр изучения национальных конфликтов подготовил карту межэтнической напряженности в регионах России" [Chechnya more tolerant than Crimea: Center for Study of Ethnic Conflict has prepared a map of ethnic tensions in Russia's regions], 6 October 2014 <http://www.gazeta.ru/social/2014/10/06/6251893.shtml>

Part of the Crimean Tatar population in Crimea may gradually radicalize, and inter-ethnic confrontation may grow, concludes the Center for the Study of Ethnic Conflicts... On the whole, the country level of ethnic enmity has decreased over the past six months by 35%, which may be related to Ukrainian news agenda, experts say.

Specialists from the Center for the Study of ethnic conflicts (CSEC) have interviewed 70 experts, political scientists, human rights activists, journalists and law enforcement officials and made an interactive map of ethnic tensions in Russia's regions. According to this data, from April to September 2014 the most ethnically tense regions were Moscow, Dagestan and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, not far from them by the number of inter-ethnic conflicts were the Krasnodar Territory, the Republic of Crimea, the Republic of Tatarstan, St. Petersburg, Saratov Oblast, Stavropol Krai and Chelyabinsk region.

The most tolerant, according to CSEC's data, were Chechnya, Ingushetia, Omsk region, Karachai-Cherkessia, and others.

...[in Crimea], center specialists predict a gradual marginalization and degradation of the Mejlis and as one among possible threats, the radicalization of its members, the reformation of the organization from a nationalist to a religious extremist one....



Russian regional map highlighting ethnic tension areas. Source: club-rf.ru

Fall Draft Optimism

30 September 2014

“According to data of the RF Armed Forces Scientific Research Center, 85 percent of servicemen (both conscripts as well as contract personnel) experience pride in belonging to the profession of Homeland defender.”

OE Watch Commentary: *The Fall 2014 draft campaign began on 1 October, and during the next 90 days the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) will conscript just over 154,000 young Russian men to serve in the military or other security structures for one year. The accompanying excerpt comes from an MoD press briefing, where defense officials reviewed some of the highlights from this draft campaign. According to this statement, attracting young Russian males to serve as conscripts in the military has become much less of a problem.*

The report describes many of the incentives which the MoD and the Russian government have implemented to encourage young Russian men to fulfill their conscript duty, e.g., better food, living facilities, uniforms, health care, transportation, etc. Conscripts are now provided with smorgasbord-like dining and regular hot showers. It also reminds readers that completion of military service is now a prerequisite for a career in state civil and municipal service. The MoD is sponsoring legislation which will increase fines for those who evade the draft, as well as prosecuting those unofficial organizations which “offer services to draft-age citizens for evading the draft for military service.”

The excerpt points out that the education qualifications of the draft pool continues to improve. Almost 20% of those drafted in the spring had completed college, and more conscripts are joining who already possess a military specialty upon induction. While there are still some health issues among new conscripts and draft evasion remains problematic, public attitudes toward military service have improved significantly. According to this report, more than 85% of the Russian population now trusts the military, with an equal percentage of those in uniform sharing a similar positive view of the military.

Many Russian military analysts have suggested that, given the complexity and

Source: “В ходе осеннего призыва на военную службу будет направлено 154 100 человек,” [154,100 Persons Will Be Sent for Military Service in the Fall Draft] Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 30 September 2014.

In accordance with the Russian Presidential Edict, 154,100 persons will be called up for military service during the fall draft and will be sent to perform it in the Armed Forces, other troops, military force elements, and entities...

...The increased number of new recruits with a higher education is having a positive impact on manning the troops. This spring they numbered almost 20 percent, i.e., almost every fifth conscripted serviceman -- this is an already established young person in the age of 23-25 who has found his place in life and has a trade...

Lt-Gen Tonkoshkurov noted that during the fall draft 32,500 citizens (approximately a fifth of the overall number of new recruits) will arrive in the troops already trained in a large number of military training specialties or having specialties related to military occupational specialties. ...At the same time he emphasized that the number of draft-dodgers has a “stable trend toward declining and has dropped more than 20 percent compared with last year.” According to Tonkoshkurov, this was the result of a policy being followed by the state aimed at increasing the social status of a person in epaulets and the prestige and attractiveness of Armed Forces service.

“As of 1 January of this year amendments to legislation entered into force in accordance with which citizens who have not performed military service without legitimate grounds shall be deprived of rights to hold positions in state civil and municipal service,” Lt-Gen Tonkoshkurov pointed out.

In a year the proportion of Russians trusting the Armed Forces increased by a third, up to 86 percent, and the number of persons opposing them dropped by a third, from 21 percent to 7 percent. A VTsIOM [All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center] survey of citizens from 130 towns in 42 regions of Russia showed corresponding results.

According to data of the RF Armed Forces Scientific Research Center, 85 percent of servicemen (both conscripts as well as contract personnel) experience pride in belonging to the profession of Homeland defender... And 66 percent of Russians specifically regard evasion of service in the Armed Forces as the main manifestation of unpatriotic feelings.

Shifting to questions involving the state of health and physical preparedness of the draft contingent, Lt-Gen Tonkoshkurov directed the attention of those assembled to a number of acute problems which still exist. ...Lt-Gen Tonkoshkurov emphasized that special attention is given in draft campaigns to providing comfortable conditions in conducting military transport movements, which basically are by rail transportation and civil aviation aircraft. ...During the 2014 spring draft campaign, servicemen at induction centers were provided for the first time with items of personal hygiene which are part of the army toiletry case.

(continued)

Continued: Fall Draft Optimism

demands of the modern battlefield, Russia needs to transition to a fully professional military. There are currently some 270,000 contract soldiers serving in the Russian military, and this figure is expected to grow to 425,000 by 2017. However, even with this increased number of contract soldiers, the Russian military will continue to be partially staffed by conscripts. The Russian political and military leadership continue to maintain that performing military duty remains an obligation for every young man. End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

Lt-Gen Tonkoshkurov also said that a phased transition has begun in the troops to having servicemen wear a year-around set of clothing distinguished by its functionality and allowing servicemen to perform all kinds of combat and special missions in various climatic and weather conditions in a range of temperatures from +40° to -50°C. Servicemen will receive this clothing right in the troops, and they will be provided with it above all for military service in areas with an especially cold climate.

With respect to the organization of meals for draftees at induction centers, from the first day all are provided with three hot meals a day. The assortment of food products fully conforms to modern demands.... In accordance with a Defense Minister decision, military unit mess-halls have been converted to the arrangement of meals with smorgasbord elements for personnel.... To improve the personnel's everyday conditions, work was done to equip tearooms in barracks spaces and to install washing machines and shower stalls.

...Major-General of Justice Aleksandr Nikitin, chief of Main Military Procuracy Directorate of Oversight Over Fulfillment of Laws by Military Command and Control Entities, Military Units, and Establishments, also spoke at the press conference.

He announced that as a result of checks in the course of the current year's spring call-up over 15,800 citizens had been held administratively liable by law-enforcement entities for attempts to evade the call-up for military or alternative civilian service, and materials on 2,700 citizens had been sent to investigative bodies.

Nikitin noted that not only military commissariat personnel, but also medical personnel, so-called pseudo-rights advocates, and simply swindlers were among those desiring "to make some extra money on certain young people's desire to evade the call-up for military service."

"The Main Military Procuracy is monitoring the electronic mass media and Internet websites in order to stop the illegal actions of certain organizations and persons who offered services to draft-age citizens for evading the draft for military service, and this work already has produced certain results," the Main Military Procuracy representative declared.

Nikitin emphasized that "those young people who think to buy their way out of military service for money are committing actions forming the element of a crime under RF UK [Criminal Code] Article 291, for which they immediately will be held criminally liable."

"And the question of the call-up for military service just will not be closed for them," Nikitin warned.

Following the draft for military service, each young person will acquire more than 30 new state-guaranteed rights, benefits, and social guarantees as a serviceman.

"These are rights and benefits in the area of public health, work, education, financial and other kinds of support, social security, and even rights and benefits in housing matters. Their near and dear ones will acquire a number of rights and social guarantees," Nikitin said. The Main Military Procuracy representative noted that at the same time, in acquiring a large number of new rights and social guarantees, conscripted servicemen also bear very serious obligations and various kinds of liability are envisaged for them.

The Kremlin's Sixth-Generation Weapons

15 September 2014

OE Watch Commentary: A favorite theme of the Kremlin-controlled Russian national media centers upon the belief that the West (the US in particular) is determined to weaken Russia in order to gain access to its abundant natural resources. For instance, during the past ten months pro-Kremlin media pundits have asserted that these aggressive Western intentions are the primary cause of the current conflict in SE Ukraine. According to their logic, the West has been trying to gain a strategic foothold in Ukraine, from which it will be much easier to attack Russia.

To stymie this alleged US aggression, the Kremlin has not only been supporting pro-Russian separatist forces in Ukraine but also been strengthening its own military forces. Trillions of rubles have been allocated through 2020 toward modernizing its armed forces. Despite the success of Russia's "polite green men" in seizing Crimea (and likely military support of separatist forces in SE Ukraine), Russian military leaders understand that their armed forces continue to lag behind their US/NATO counterparts in many key conventional areas. The excerpt from the adjacent article suggests that Russian military planners are searching for a "secret weapon" which will address this gap and perhaps give the Kremlin a military advantage over its nominal enemies in the West.

The slightly sarcastic article from the Russian journal, Versiya [Version], makes reference to "sixth-generation weapons," such as "biotechnological systems and weapons for precision strikes against targets on land, in the air, and under water," "climate weapons," "electromagnetic guns," and hypersonic missiles. According to the author, some of these concepts have been on the drawing board since Soviet times, but, due to lack of funding and political will, were never fully developed. Today the situation is far different and Russia "finally has sixth-generation weapons." However, even if Russia were

Source: Georgiy Filin, "Секретный арсенал: В России разработали климатическое оружие и гиперзвуковые ракеты" [Secret Arsenal: Climate Weapons, Hypersonic Missiles Developed in Russia], Versiya, 15 September 2014. http://versia.ru/articles/2014/sep/15/sekretniy_arsenal

According to our country's president, the Russian military now has weapons that "the world's other armies do not have." This is surprising, is it not? Indeed, if one believes the rumors, the domestic defense complex has been marked by decline since the Soviet era and all the talented developers fled to the West a long time ago. In point of fact, it turns out that we still have something with which to surprise a potential opponent. It is no accident that Minister of Defense Sergey Shoygu is "blabbing about" about weapons "without analogs anywhere in the world" and Deputy Prime Minister Dmitriy Rogozin is reporting to the government about successes in development of "sixth-generation offensive and defensive systems." Just what are these weapons that only the Russian military has, and what are the specialists saying about them?

According to people in the know, fifth- and sixth-generation weapons are as different from one another as a Neanderthal from a Bulava [a mace and also the designation for a submarine-launched ballistic missile]. It is difficult to say for certain exactly when development of sixth-generation offensive and defensive systems in our country began. According to the rumors, it was back in the late 1980s, shortly before the collapse of the USSR. Advanced developments were subsequently put on ice for a long time. At first, the country did not have enough money, and later, it lacked the political will to update the army. And just two years ago, Igor Korotchenko (a member of the presidium of the advisory council to the chairman of the Russian government's Military-Industrial Commission) pulled back a bit of the curtain that had been concealing the most secret research of domestic weapons makers. It turns out that all this time, Russian masters had been keeping their nose to the grindstone but doing so without excessive pomp and without showing off their achievements. And now, if Korotchenko is to be believed, our country finally has sixth-generation weapons: "highly intelligent systems that will implement the principle of noncontact war and automatic selection and striking of targets depending on battlefield conditions." We are talking about biological and biotechnological systems and weapons for precision strikes against targets on land, in the air, and under water, as well as artificial intelligence systems in weapons systems and in military equipment...

...Let us take climate weapons, for example. Until recently, military specialists refrained from serious discussions of their prospects. It was believed that at science's current level, development of [such weapons] would take a minimum of several decades. In point of fact, it turns out that some success could be achieved even today based on exiting knowledge. Even today, for example, Russian developments in the area of climate weapons could trigger a drought with, as Igor Korotchenko puts it, "enormous consequences." "We experienced such a drought literally a short while ago," the expert noted...

...Electromagnetic guns are also classified as sixth-generation weapons. Just recently, they were being talked about as something from the realm of impossible fantasy. Yes, purely theoretically, such guns could shoot almost silently, they have an enormous firing rate, and their projectile flight speed and striking distance are higher than those of conventional artillery systems. But! Such guns require a special energy source. But does this mean that they are still

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Continued: The Kremlin's Sixth-Generation Weapons

to field these weapon systems, “a slightly competent military expert will tell you that offensive and defensive systems alone are no panacea.” Therefore, the article suggests that the BRICS economic alliance (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) will transform over time into “a single military-engineering complex,” a 21st Century Warsaw Pact, from which Russia will be able to employ its advanced weaponry.

The article includes quotes from two Russian military experts (Igor Korotchenko and Konstantin Sivkov) and the vice premier in charge of Russia's military industry (Dmitry Rogozin), individuals who are notorious both for exaggerating Russia's military potential and putting all of the world's ills at America's doorstep. These professionals frequently hearken back to the military glories of the Soviet Union when the USSR was the geopolitical rival of the US. They maintain that raw military strength is the key component of Russia's greatness.

Despite such bellicose rhetoric, questions remain regarding the necessary technical and industrial infrastructure for Russia to construct such weapons. While Russian defense spending continues to increase, there has not been a corresponding increase in long-term capital investment within Russian industry and social infrastructure. Equally doubtful are the assertions that the other members of the BRICS economic alliance will adopt the Kremlin's anti-Western geopolitical perspective. Still, the determined assertion that Russia must develop a new generation of weapons and form a new alliance to defend itself from Western aggression reflects the Kremlin's misunderstanding of Western intentions.
End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)

a fairytale? Not at all. Specialists assure us that last year, Russian developers succeeded in constructing and testing an electromagnetic gun. And the first series-produced models could be put into inventory as early as this year. In contrast, the Americans have no plans to put theirs into inventory earlier than 2016.

Electromagnetic guns are one of 23 projects in the area of creation of sixth-generation weapons that the Advanced Research Foundation has been implementing this year. Incidentally, at least 40 such developments will exist by year's end. According to Dmitriy Rogozin, these developments “will fundamentally change the nature of waging modern wars.” In all likelihood, these wars will be “noncontact” wars and will have no battlefield casualties: They will be waged by robots.”

...Hypersonic missiles are not considered sixth-generation weapons in pure form. Military specialists relegate them to a niche between fifth- and sixth-generation weapons. It is telling that until recently, neither we nor the Americans had such weapons. Tests of the prototype known as the X-51A Waverider have been conducted across the ocean, but things did not go well with its speed. Despite its declared 7,500 km/h, the missile did not reach more than 5,000 [km/h]. And its maximum range was just slightly more than 400 km (its declared [range] was 1,000). But by all accounts, our weapons makers have managed to run rings around their rivals. “Our missiles have also been flying at hypersonic speeds,” explained Boris Obnosov (general director of the corporation Takticheskoye Raketnoye Vooruzheniye [Strategic Missile Munitions]), “but we were interested in stable flight in the stratosphere at hypersound rather than in short-term [flight]” -- at speeds of 10,000 to 14,000 km/h. And judging by certain information, one can now talk about reaching the first declared speed milestone. Our specialists have achieved what the Americans have not....

...Having an ultramodern secret weapon is certainly wonderful. But any even slightly competent military expert will tell you that offensive and defensive systems alone are no panacea. Success in modern war requires more than technological superiority. The existence of ally countries is also important. The Warsaw Pact collapsed a little over a quarter-century ago, and the Russian Army had practically no allies left. But times are changing: It can now be said that a new military and political alliance is replacing the Warsaw Pact. And the economic alliance known by the acronym BRICS (the alliance of Russia with Brazil, India, China, and South Africa) will be its foundation. “You understand that any economic alliance will inevitably become a military and political alliance for one reason,” explains Konstantin Sivkov (first vice president of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems). “The instant close economic cooperation between countries begins, the matter of protecting their interests arises. Perhaps, given the intensity of the Russian-Chinese relations that currently exist, we can be so bold as to say that a military alliance will emerge. The rate of military training exercises between our countries is comparable to what existed between the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries.”

...Meanwhile, China is quietly “getting hooked on” Russian technologies and, as specialists believe, from the standpoint of control and communication systems, its armed forces are integrated with Russian [forces]. Thus, Konstantin Sivkov believes that after cooperation with the other BRICS countries has been established, we will merge the weapon systems of Russia, India, China, Brazil, and South Africa into a single military-engineering complex -- one that will also become the foundation for deploying our latest sixth-generation systems.

Russian Journalists in Ukraine

6 October 2014

“The union of journalist of Moscow presented a documentary entitled “Chronicles of contemporary Ukraine: southeast” that showed the deadly risk to which Russian journalists working in Ukraine, another hot spot, were exposed.”

OE Watch Commentary: Since assuming the Russian leadership position, one of Vladimir Putin’s most significant achievements has been the consolidation of the country’s major media under indirect Kremlin control. While there is no direct Soviet-style censorship (yet), today all of the major Russian media outlets faithfully provide a pro-Kremlin perspective. The ongoing conflict with Ukraine provides a stark and troubling example of the Russian media’s subordination. For Russia’s television audience (where the great majority of Russians still get their news), the conflict has been portrayed as a fight between good (pro-Russian separatists in SE Ukraine) versus evil (the pro-Western fascist-like government in Kiev).

Russian journalists have played a key pole in constructing this narrative, and, not surprisingly, a number have been kidnapped, wounded or killed while covering this conflict. Given the importance that the Kremlin has placed on information operations, these incidents with Russian journalists in Ukraine have been front-page stories, and the journalist themselves have been treated with the highest state honors. In the Kremlin rendition these fearless journalists have risked life and limb to ensure that the evil deeds of the illegal government in Kiev and its fascist forces are fully revealed.

The accompanying brief excerpt describes an initiative by the Moscow Union of Journalists to enlighten its Western counterparts by producing a documentary which describes the “actions of Ukrainian security agencies against civilian and Russians press.” The Union’s leader claimed that her “Western colleagues...did not know what was happening in the southeast of Ukraine now.” The article goes on to describe how the Union is attempting to gain legal protection and benefits from the Russian government for journalists who perform front-line duty. According to the leader of the journalist union, journalists in combat zones should be provided both with insurance and proper protective gear. In its desire to sway a Western audience, while simultaneously gaining government benefits for journalists, this excerpt serves as an apt metaphor for the state of Russian journalism today. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Funeral procession for Russian journalist, Andrei Stenin, killed in Ukraine. 5 September. Source: ria.ru

Source: Alexander Stepanov, “Военкорам дадут особый статус?” [Will Military Correspondents be Given a Special Status?], Moskovsky Komsomolets, 6 October 2014. <http://www.mk.ru/social/2014/10/05/voenkoram-dadut-osobyi-status.html>

The union of journalist of Moscow presented a documentary entitled “Chronicles of contemporary Ukraine: southeast” that showed the deadly risk to which Russian journalists working in Ukraine, another hot spot, were exposed. At presentation of the documentary Lyudmila Shcherbina, senior secretary of the union of journalists of Moscow, announced that the organization was going to turn to the Defense Ministry with an initiative of granting of status of “participant of combat operations” to the correspondents who covered events in the zone of combat operations.

To the presentation of the documentary, the union of journalists of Moscow invited representatives of all leading mass media of Russia. In the foreword Shcherbina said that, first of all, this documentary was intended for our Western colleagues majority of which did not know what was happening in the southeast of Ukraine now. Shcherbina stressed: “This documentary was created due to enthusiasm. We are going to translate it into English and we will try to distribute it among Russian embassies and to send it to Russian special representative in the UN Vitaly Churkin for our diplomats to be able to present substantiated arguments about actions of Ukrainian security agencies against civilian and Russians press.”

Shcherbina also announced that Russian journalists working in hot spots should be protected including legislative protection. For example, it is necessary to give status of participants of combat operations to the reporters who have visited hot spots. This will result in serious social benefits. She emphasized: “We prepared a letter to Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.... The union also wants to achieve decent insurance and to obtain normal equipment for the journalists who work in the zones of combat operation.”

Baltic Concerns over Hybrid Warfare

2 October 2014

“What is Russia doing? Russia is preparing society, so that later it would be enough to merely send in the army. The goal of the information war is to break the nation’s will to resist,”

OE Watch Commentary: The ripple effects of the ongoing conflict between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces in SE Ukraine are strongly felt in the Baltic countries. With their significant ethnic Russian minority populations (Latvia-28%, Estonia-25% and Lithuania-6%), Baltic leaders fear that the Kremlin could use ethnic tensions to possibly stoke violence and seize territory.

The first three excerpts come from three different Lithuanian articles and describe various measures to combat Russia’s “hybrid-warfare” strategy. The first points out the necessity of crushing any insurgency quickly before the enemy has a chance to establish a quasi-legitimate presence. It claims that the seizure of Crimea began when “30 people came and occupied an administration building.” The second article describes how all Lithuanian citizens can help to defend against this hybrid threat and the need to make timely preparations before the conflict begins. For instance, IT experts can help to protect digital infrastructure, while artists and journalists can be enlisted within the information sphere. The final Lithuanian article describes how even computer games might be a part of the Kremlin’s larger information strategy, where only the Red Army can win. It goes on to point out that the significant Russian media presence within Lithuania presents a powerful propaganda tool for the Kremlin. The final excerpt comes from a Latvian article which warns parents of allowing their children to participate in Russia-sponsored summer camps, where these children could be exposed to virulent ideas of Russian nationalism. It points out that participation in such camps could “reduce young people’s sense of belonging to Latvia.”

Even though the Baltic countries are EU and NATO members, they perceive that their countries are seriously overmatched in defending against what has been labeled as a “hybrid” Russian military threat. While much of this concern stems from their checkered history with Russia, some of it also stems from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the brief conflict between Russia and Georgia in August

Source: Ricardas Cekutis, “Our Army Lacks Everything, but It Will Fight,” Respublika, 26 September - 2 October 2014.

Interview with Major General Jonas Vytautas Zukas

... [Cekutis] Has the Lithuanian Army found any lessons to be learned from the conflict in Ukraine? What are the main conclusions you have made?

[Zukas] The first and main conclusion is that we cannot allow the enemy to operate in our territory. This is the lesson the Ukrainians have learned very well, too. Admittedly, it took them a while. After they did not fully learn the Crimea lesson, the same was repeated in Donbas. In any Military Academy, from the very first courses, cadets are taught that the enemy cannot be allowed to operate behind one’s back, especially parachute or sabotage enemy units. They should be destroyed immediately. Do not delay in any way, otherwise the national defense will face even greater challenges later. After all, it all started from Crimea, where 30 people came and occupied an administration building. During the night nothing was done, and then deputies were summoned in the morning, they appointed their government, held a referendum, and so on. There was no timely response. A similar situation was in Donbas as well, the power structures did not react initially, and the situation became so bad that the army had to be sent there, and then it all turned into a big war. If armed people who are not members of your army or other state structures appear in your territory, the country’s Armed Forces must react without delay.

Source: Dovydas Pancerovas, “What Should We Do, if Weight of Russian Aggression Fell on Lithuania?” lrytas.lt, 29 September 2014. www.lrytas.lt

Citizens Can Already Start Preparing for Possible Russian Aggression

...The experts stressed that in a case of war the state would need not only soldiers, but also other specialists. For example, firemen, construction workers, energy field workers, engineers, communications specialists, logistics, transportation specialists and repairmen. The majority of Lithuanian people would continue to do what they were doing during peacetime.

“The term of resistance should expand in our minds, because for a long time defense was understood only as a business of the military. There are many forms of resistance, which are very simple. This is failure to comply, fight on the information space, perhaps even sabotage according to one’s capabilities. Everyone must do what he or she can do best,” the Lithuanian military officer said.

For example, in a modern war the input of IT specialists would be very important. They would be defending Lithuania’s computers against break-ins and would be harming computers of the enemy. In other words, they would be fighting the technological side of the information war.

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Continued: Baltic Concerns over Hybrid Warfare

2008. The Baltic countries have observed that the political and economic measures taken against Russia so far have had little effect on halting Kremlin aggression. **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**

Artists could be creating the so called memes, caricatures, posters and other products, which would rapidly spread on social networks and would be a tool of propaganda.

“Reporters because of their profession are pretty good OSINT (open source intelligence) experts. After minimal training, they could be involved in information war and propaganda,” Baciulis said...

Source: Ugne Karaliunaite, “Russia Turning Towards Baltic States: For What Things Ground Being Prepared?” Delfi, 26 September 2014. <http://www.delfi.lt>

Lithuanian Information War Officer Views Russian Propaganda

Having saddled up information war horses, the Kremlin has already started a war in Lithuania. Information operations officer Aurimas Navys, who spoke during the conference Breaking Point organized in Palanga, listed examples of the attempts to prepare the ground for further war in Lithuania.

“The war is taking place not just in Ukraine. There is a war in the Baltic states, too. Of course, this war is not the war that you are used to seeing. The war is taking place in Lithuania, but it is not taking place at sea or on land. The war is taking place in the information sphere,” Navys said during the conference....

...According to him, the soviet symbols are also disseminated via computer games, too. According to him, approximately 60 percent of the video games that are sold in Lithuania are recorded in Russia.

“This way one has a very easy access to the teenager or a young person who plays those games constantly,” he said.

The officer also noticed information war signs in the game “PSI: Siberian Conflict,” in which the star symbol is also used.

“The game involves aliens who land in Siberia, where the Red Army is. The most interesting thing is the fact that if you play for the aliens, you always lose -- it is simply impossible to win. One can win only if one plays for the Red Army,” Navys said.

...However, according to the officer, the biggest amount of propaganda in Lithuania is spread via television. In Lithuania there are approximately 97 percent of residents who watch TV on a regular basis. The number of those who watch Russian channels is 22 percent, which is approximately 406,000 residents.

“To change the constitution one needs 300,000 residents. Can you imagine what would happen, if Russian propaganda affected all those who watch those channels,” Navys said....

...The officer who delivered the speech said he was worried that according to the current strategy of Russia the Crimea annexation scenario, during which territory is occupied without bloodshed, can be repeated.

“What is Russia doing? Russia is preparing society, so that later it would be enough to merely send in the army. The goal of the information war is to break the nation’s will to resist,” Navys said.



Baltic States. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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Continued: Baltic Concerns over Hybrid Warfare

Source: "Participation of Latvian Youth in Russian Ideology Camps Pose Risks – Security Police," BNS, 25 September 2014. <http://www.bns.ee>

Dangers of Latvians Taking Part in Russian Ideological Camps

Participation of Latvian youth in military and ideology-oriented camps in Russia, promoting Russia's geopolitical interests, pose long-term risks, BNS learned from the Latvian Security Police.

The Security Police said that this is a way to establish ties between camp visitors and the Russian elite, reducing young people's sense of belonging to Latvia.

Participation in such camps is not illegal, but parents who agree to send their children to such youth camps should be aware that their children are subjected to manipulation risks, they might be used as instruments in implementing Russia's interests in Latvia, and it might leave a negative impact on their career prospects in Latvia, the Security Police said....

...A group of eight Latvian pupils from Latvia lead by an Afghanistan war veteran in August took part in Russia's military political youth camp Sojuz. The camp took place in Kyrgyzstan and was organized by an officer of the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate. The camp provided training in shooting, information war and reconnaissance....

Sergey Shoygu: Russia's Emergency Defense Minister A Bio-Sketch

By Ray Finch, FMSO

This paper briefly examines the background of Russia's Minister of Defense, Sergey Shoygu, the speculation behind his sudden appointment in November 2012, the challenges he faces, his efforts thus far within the Defense Ministry, and possible future implications -both military and political – surrounding his selection as Russia's chief military representative. This paper posits that should the stars align correctly, as a close friend of President Vladimir Putin, Shoygu could become the next leader of Russia.

<http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/Finch-Shoygu.pdf>



Alaska No Longer the 49th State?

15 October 2014

“This Saturday marks 147 years since the US bought Alaska from Russia. If the man in charge of Russia’s defense industries gets his way, Sarah Palin will not only be able to see Russia from her front porch, but her front porch will be in Russia.”

Source: Harley Balzer, “Is Alaska Next on Russia’s List?,” Moscow Times, 15 October 2014.

OE Watch Commentary: As reported in the Moscow Times, an English-language newspaper in Russia, the publication of a Russian book arguing the neo-imperialist position that Russia has a right to Alaska may be taken more seriously after Dmitry Rogozin, a deputy prime minister and former Ambassador to NATO, endorsed that view. This is not a new argument. Now with Russia’s concerted effort to re-militarize the Arctic, the claim that the US really has no status in the Arctic seems deliberately timed. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Is Alaska Next on Russia’s List?

Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin wrote a foreword to a book published earlier this year, “Alaska Betrayed and Sold: The History of a Palace Conspiracy,” which argues that Russia has a right to get back “Russian America.”

Rogozin endorses the author’s conclusion, which recognizes “the historical and judicial right of Russia for the return of the lost colonies, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, over which the Russian flag flew 150 years ago.”

Before he became deputy prime minister, with responsibility for coordinating the work of the defense industry, Rogozin was Russia’s ambassador to NATO. In 2003, Rogozin was the leader of the Rodina Party, a political organization that received Kremlin support in an effort to draw votes from nationalist parties....

The author of the book on Alaska’s sale, Ivan Mironov, was accused of attempting to assassinate Russia’s privatization architect, Anatoly Chubais, in 2005. He spent two

years in prison before being pardoned by the Russian Duma. Mironov’s treatise initially appeared in 2007 with the title “Fatal Bargain. How Alaska Was Sold.”

Mironov’s view of history is that it needs frequent revision in response to how people understand world events. This leads him to revise the evaluation of Russia’s sale of Alaska, recognizing it as a betrayal equivalent to Chubais’s privatization program in the 1990s. Rather than viewing the sale of Alaska as a decision to jettison unprofitable overseas projects, it now should be seen as a betrayal of Russia’s great power status.

Rogozin’s foreword fully embraces Mironov’s version of history. “Russia giving up its colonial possessions makes it necessary to look in a different way at our diplomacy in the era of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, trading away pieces of the Soviet Empire.”

Rogozin argues that by refuting “the outright lies and falsifications” about the transfer of Alaska it becomes possible to “bring down the liberal idols of the 19th century - the Russian reformers of Alexander II and his brother Grand Duke Konstantin.” They betrayed Russia’s geopolitical interests in the Pacific, demonstrating “the impossibility of establishing diplomatic relations exclusively on concessions and compromises.”

For Rogozin, Mironov’s book illustrates that a single mistake in foreign policy “can produce an entire century of loss and defeat of a great power.” He concludes his short foreword with a call for the return of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands to Russia.

It may well be the case that Putin is simply using Rogozin’s hyperbole as a way to put pressure on diplomatic interlocutors. But the fact remains that Rogozin is not on the fringes of Russian politics - he has consistently been promoted and, as deputy prime minister, now oversees the Russian defense industry. The fact that such a prominent figure could make such statements about Russia’s claim to Alaska is significant.

After the annexation of Crimea in March, which was only part of Ukraine because of a “historical mistake,” according to Russia, could Alaska be next on Russia’s list?

An Expensive but Serious Military Effort in the Arctic

19 September 2014

“The Novaya Zemlya archipelago is about to become home to yet another major Russian Air Force base. Rogachevo Airfield has been rapidly renovated and rebuilt and is now ready to receive MiG-31BM fighter-interceptors. The Western Military District said that the aircrews had already rehearsed landing at Rogachevo. They did not announce where the MiGs will be flying from to remote site, but the regiment equipped with these fighter-interceptors that is stationed in Perm (Bolshoye Savino).”

Source: Sergey Ishchenko, “Powder Keg Beneath the Arctic Ice,” Svobodnaya Pressa, 19 September 2014. <http://www.svpressa.ru>

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian build-up in the Arctic continues. For those Westerners who may have missed it, it is in response to what is portrayed as a large-scale Western build up in the Arctic. This article does a good job of summing up recent Russian military basing in the Arctic region and bemoans the amount of “crazy money” that is being spent, but it then concludes that the bases and expenses are necessary to counter the West.

Also of interest in the article is the description of the expansion of ground forces. Another recent article states that over the course of 2016 Arctic Command will receive special gear and special vehicles, in particular, two-section off-road transporters, snowmobiles, and air-cushioned vehicles. The Russian MTLB artillery tractor is already a first-rate mobility asset for northern forces. Instead of making do with existing equipment, the Russians are intent on fielding a highly mobile Arctic ground force and expanding their capability. **End OE Watch Commentary (Gau)**

Powder Keg Beneath the Arctic Ice. Why MiG-31BM's Are Being Redeployed to the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago

In order to grasp the scale of the defense-related events taking place in our Arctic region, consider recent events. For the first time in history a parachute battalion task force numbering 350 men jumped onto the Novosibirskiye Ostrova archipelago (between the Laptev and East Siberian Seas) in March this year.

Viktor Bondarev, Commander in Chief of the Russian Federation Air Force, announced that serious renovation and reconstruction work began at the *Temp* Airfield on Ostrov Kotelnyy (those same Novosibirskiye Ostrova) that was abandoned 30 years ago. The aim is to prepare an airstrip on permafrost that can handle all types of aircraft including heavy transports and strategic missile platforms. The specially-constituted 99th Tactical Group, whose composition, armament, and strength have not yet been announced, will deploy there shortly.

Restoration work has gotten under way or is in the final planning stages at the Arctic military airfields *Tiksi*, *Naryan-Mar*, *Alykel*, *Anderma*, *Nagurskaya*, and *Anadyr*.

The newly-constituted 80th Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade is also about to deploy to the Alakurti settlement (Murmansk Oblast). It will be the second significant combined-arms formation assigned to the Arctic sector. Previously, the only large ground force in the Arctic was the 200th Separate Motorized Infantry Brigade based in Pechenga (Murmansk Oblast)...

Radar posts and aviation vectoring points are being deployed on the Ostrova Zemli Aleksandra I (Franz Josef archipelago), Novaya Zemlya, Ostrov Vrangelya, and Mys

Shmidta. New Russian Federation FSB border posts and positions for air defense surface-to-air missile troops are being built on the Arctic coast.

A Fifth Military District, the North Joint Strategic Command, based on the Northern Fleet, will command all of this armada dispersed over a gigantic and almost unpopulated expanse. The sailors will be the main force -- only their surface ships, aircraft, and submarines are capable of constituting a strike force if and when combat operations materialize in the Arctic. Command.

Crazy Money: Clearly, all these transformations in the Arctic cost the country crazy money. Just take that Rogachevo Airfield on Novaya Zemlya that has been prepared to receive the MiGs. Building anything on permafrost is fearfully expensive. Fortunately, some of the old buildings, airstrips and roads can be repaired and reused. Still having an entire regiment of MiG-31BM's stationed in the Arctic will cost the country a fortune. This fortune is so considerable that General Vladimir Mikhaylov, former Commander in Chief of the Russian Federation Air Force, was very doubtful about the feasibility of such a move: “In the prevailing situation we have no need for a base there. First we need to get to grips with all the issues on the mainland, then, when we’re ‘cool’ with these, let us go to Novaya Zemlya.”

We have hardly become “cool.” Evidently the military-political situation is so pressing that it is time for us to tighten our belts and station

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Continued: An Expensive but Serious Military Effort in the Arctic

fighter-interceptors in the High North. We are not the only ones feverishly excavating military-political emplacements in the Arctic. Here are just a few fragments of similar significant work abroad.

Back in 2011 the Pentagon established its own equivalent of our North Operational-Strategic Command]. This happened after President Barack Obama signed a directive that eliminated the hitherto existing division of zones of responsibility in the Arctic region among the US Army's Northern, European, and Pacific Commands. The entire Russian seaboard from the Kola Peninsula to Kamchatka is now the zone of responsibility of the Americans' European Command.

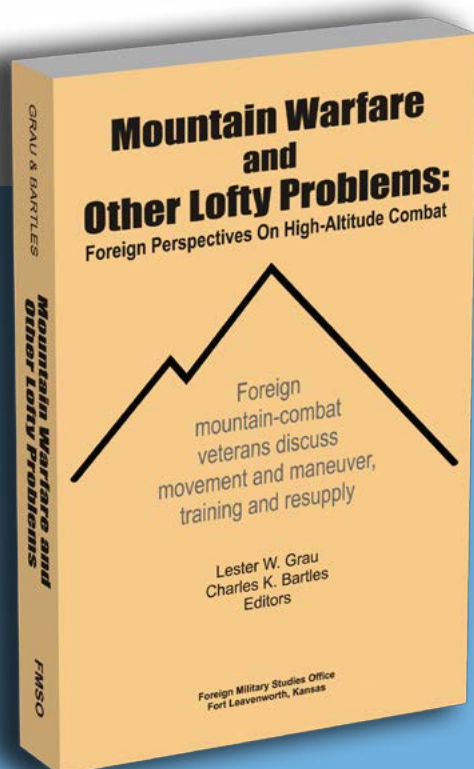
For several years the United States and Canada have been staging regular military exercises in Arctic waters. And in April 2012 the Americans completed trials of the B-2 Spirit bomber over the North Pole. The operation of the strategic bomber's onboard equipment and combat systems was verified.

According to intelligence supplied by our General Staff, the number of voyages by foreign nuclear-powered submarines (primarily American) in Arctic waters has increased by 50 percent in recent years. The grouping of US general-purpose forces, including missile defense forces based in Alaska and adjacent islands of the Aleutian Chain, is being augmented.

Five years ago Denmark activated a special Arctic military command and a center to train special-purpose forces for operations in the severe conditions of the High North. Later on Norway did the same thing.

Since the West is spending the resources needed to equip the Arctic theater -- it is dangerous for us not to do so. Six months ago Russian Vice Premier Dmitriy Rogozin stated: "It's not difficult to fathom, because the quantity of resources in the world is diminishing, the fight for them, for access to them will become increasingly fierce. Many very strong, very muscular, broad-shouldered forces are itching to get their hands on the Arctic."

So, are we heading for a new 1941 in the Arctic Circle? One would like to hope that this is hardly the case. But we will need to prepare ourselves for it. When all is said and done, the military in every country engages in this activity precisely in order to prevent the thunder of war. We need only become muscular and broad-shouldered.



The United States Army has been involved in a mountain war for a decade. After all this time, mountain combat remains a stubbornly difficult mission and technology can offer only modest support to the infantry's mission of closing with the enemy or the logistician's mission of getting support forward. This book by Les Grau and Chuck Bartles covers operations and tactics, artillery, and aviation support, reconnaissance, communications, training, and logistics in the mountains.

This book is not United States Army doctrine. Rather, it is offered as an alternate view to a most-challenging military environment.

Arctic Naval and Amphibious Exercises

3 October 2014

“Radar detachments and aviation guidance points are now operational on Wrangel Island and Cape Schmidt. Combat aircraft will patrol the borders of the Russian Federation and the neutral territory of the Arctic.”

Source: Vladimir Mukhin, “Russia Launches Military Radar Stations near Alaska,” Rossiyskaya Gazeta Online, 3 October 2014. <http://rg.ru/>

OE Watch Commentary: Russian naval exercises are continuing in the Arctic, and September was the optimum time to exercise, as that permits more ship maneuver without having to always follow an icebreaker. The Russian aircraft carrier “Fleet Admiral of the Soviet Union Kuznetsov” joined the exercises. It has been experiencing maintenance problems. It is Russia’s only aircraft carrier, although the Russians do not call it such, referring to it as a “heavy aircraft-carrying cruiser.” This is because it is about half the weight of a US aircraft carrier.

The other interesting feature of this exercise was the combined parachute assault and amphibious assault landing on Wrangel Island. This takes a great deal of coordination and scripting to pull off. The Russians are building an experience base for conducting such difficult forced-entry combat in the Arctic. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

Russia Launches Military Radar Stations near Alaska; ‘Sever’ Grouping Will Protect Country’s Economic Interests in the Arctic

“Following the recent strategic command post exercise Vostok-2014, “Sever” will be reinforced with naval and airborne forces. Defense Ministry Sergey Shoygu reported to President Vladimir Putin on 23 September 2014 “During the exercises, a detachment of Northern Fleet warships together with Murmansk shipping company vessels and Rosatomflot icebreakers delivered tactical group personnel and equipment to Kotelnyy Island - the New Siberian archipelago.” He stressed that live firing was conducted in the area of the archipelago using the Kinzhal anti-aircraft missile system on the large anti-submarine ship Admiral Levchenko. In addition, during the exercise, “for the first time a tactical airborne landing was made on Wrangel Island by the Airborne Troops of the 83rd Separate Airborne Assault Brigade and the Pacific Fleet’s 155th Separate Naval Infantry Brigade.”

Exercises are under way in the Northern Fleet involving the aircraft carrier Fleet Admiral of the Soviet Union Kuznetsov. Military exercises in the Arctic region have been held monthly this year...Shoygu stated that the creation of a formation of ice-class patrol ships in the Arctic will occur in the foreseeable future.

The Russian leadership explains the massive increase in military infrastructure in the Arctic by the rise in the “potential for conflict”, as declared last year by the Ministry of Regional Development. Colonel Eduard Rodyukov, corresponding member of the Academy of Military Sciences, stated “Large deposits of hydrocarbons and other

minerals have been discovered in disputed territories in the Arctic. Therefore, the establishment of new military bases and facilities is a forced measure. The Russian Federation must protect its interests there, and it does protect them.” According to him, the establishment of Russian military radar stations near the border with the United States “is not an aggressive action but a deterrent factor that helps our country to meet its geopolitical and economic objectives with the aid of military force.”



Continued Efforts to Consolidate the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)

15 October 2014

“In the course of the session key areas were outlined for the implementation of a unified technical policy of the CSTO member-states in the area of military standardization and in the formation of a unified regulatory base for the standardization of defense production...”

OE Watch Commentary: Within the general framework of continually strengthening its leverage throughout erstwhile Soviet territory, Russia has organized several supranational agreements, such as the Eurasian Economic Union. On the military front is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

The accompanying article details significant logistic and industry-based efforts at further consolidating the CSTO as a viable organization with more interoperable components and support. Of note is the leading role played by the Russian minister of trade and industry.

While CSTO training and logistic efforts continue, the organization has witnessed some political debate among its members, notably between Belarus and Russia (albeit within the context of more general Minsk-Moscow complexities). As the second excerpt notes, during the 2010 Kyrgyz political upheaval a noted supporter of Belarusian President Lukashenko directly questioned the viability of a military organization that failed to protect the leadership of one of its member-states. **End OE Watch Commentary (Sarafian)**

Source: Gorupai, O., “Военно-экономическое сотрудничество” [Military-Economic Cooperation], Красная Звезда [Red Star], 8 October 2014. <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/component/k2/item/19168-voenno-ekonomicheskoe-sotrudnichestvo>

In the Belarusian capital [Minsk] the Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Economic Cooperation (ICMEC) of member-states of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) convened its 12th session...

Under the general chairmanship of Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Alexander Potapov... leaders of the national delegations and members of the commission examined and agreed upon a series of documents which had been developed for the... interstate system of cataloguing supplies of the armed forces of CSTO member-states...

In the course of the session key areas were outlined for the implementation of a unified technical policy of the CSTO member-states in the area of military standardization and in the formation of a unified regulatory base for the standardization of defense production...

...leaders of the national contingents ... signed a memorandum of understanding ... on the creation and development of a network of service centers and joint ventures for the repair and maintenance of arms and military equipment, the improvement of the conditions of servicing, repair, modernization, technical certification, extension of the service life of arms, military equipment and ammunition, and improvement of the processes of production.

Source: Khodasevich, A., “Лукашенко боится повторить судьбу Бакиева” [Lukashenko is afraid of repeating the fate of Bakiyev], Независимая газета [Independent Newspaper], 19 April 2010. http://www.ng.ru/cis/2010-04-19/1_belorussia.html

For what have we created the CSTO, if in one of the countries of this organization ‘bloody’ events take place [and] a coup d’état has been realized?... the direct duties of the CSTO was to act as an intermediary between the opposition and President Kurmanbek Bakiyev.

Russian President Vladimir Putin: Zealot, Patriot, Or Threat?

Convictions largely determine the boundaries of political conduct (and of social activity). That which people consider important and true, that which they believe to be good and worthwhile, serves to orient them when performing particular actions and taking particular decisions.¹

Introduction

Russia is a land of eleven time zones (the largest on earth, with 6.6 million square miles) and only 146 million people (Bangladesh has 156 million spread over only 56,000 square miles). It clearly has more than enough space for its people, which troubles strategists trying to make sense of Russian President Vladimir Putin's land grabs. Troubling, that is, until one begins to unravel his personality and understanding of Russian history.

In the above citation Andrey Kokoshin, former head of Russia's National Security Council and Deputy Minister of Defense, stresses the importance of conviction. Not only is this trait a feature of Putin's personality, but his insistence on it also borders on the messianic. The West, quite naturally, sees his conviction as a threat to world peace and stability.

Masha Gessen, author of a book on Putin titled, *The Man without a Face*, adds more detailed information about his personality. She writes that his convictions have come from a difficult childhood. Putin was involved in fights as a young man anytime someone tried to humiliate him, and he has a barely containable temper. He longed to join the KGB since childhood. His rage reached paralysis, Gessen notes, when he was forced to standby and witness the downfall of his KGB's Stasi headquarters in Dresden.² His desire to return Russia to great power status is thus understandable, although not from the vantage point of his recent actions. There are other, more negotiable or peaceful ways to achieve his goals than unleashing attacks on a former and respected Russian territory.

This analysis will first examine how Putin explained himself to the US nearly seven years ago in an interview with *Time* magazine. It will then utilize Andrey Kokoshin's view of the ideology-politics-military strategy relationship as a way to understand Putin. It is apparent that Putin's national strategy is a reflection of both his personality and input from many Russians who desire to return the nation to greatness.

Putin's 2007 *Time* Magazine Interview

In 2007, at the conclusion of his first Presidential reign, Vladimir Putin was recognized as *Time*'s Man of the Year. In an interview at his dacha he offered several comments that Westerners recognized as warning signs even at that early time, due to his contempt toward the West, and the US in particular. First, Putin stated that America was out to interfere in Russia's affairs, that the US treats Russia as a party's uninvited guest, or as some savage in the wild. He stated that his thoughts are not misconceptions, but based on US attempts to influence Russia's internal and foreign policies. Second, the interviewers noted how Putin had taken away some of his population's freedom in exchange for what he termed "more security," which appears to appeal to many Russians. His popularity thus rose as he departed from office in 2008.³

Putin, whose paternal grandfather was a cook for both Lenin and Stalin, made several other comments of note. First, he stated that "the ability to compromise is not a diplomatic politeness but rather taking into account and respecting your partner's legitimate interests" (which makes one wonder about his unwillingness to compromise over Ukraine's legitimate interests and sovereignty), and that "Russia has no inten-



Putin as KGB Officer.



Artistic montage of Putin and Stalin.

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Continued: Russian President Vladimir Putin: Zealot, Patriot, Or Threat?

tion of joining military-political blocs because that would be tantamount to restricting its sovereignty.”⁴ He also noted that it is not possible to have morality separated from religious values, and that the KGB taught him to gather objective information, first and foremost, which has helped him as President.⁵

Simon Sebag Montegiore, who wrote the books, *Young Stalin* and *Catherine the Great and Potemkin*, noted in the *Time* issue that throughout Russian history no ruler has been able to simply leave power, for fear of “exposing himself and his henchmen to vengeance from their rivals.”⁶ If Putin is the rule, Yeltsin was the exception, since he did simply leave power. Putin, on the other hand, became prime minister and orchestrated a change in the Russian constitution that would allow him to serve more presidential terms, if elected. He does not seem to have the same faith as Yeltsin in the current Russian atmosphere.

Putin’s belief in restoring Russian greatness and moving those standing in his way, whether it be dissidents or competitors or nations, is a good focal point through which to view his newest term as president, which started in 2012. He is moving on all fronts and vectors, using Russia’s new found wealth to place the military in the lead to return the nation to prominence.

Ideology, Politics, Military

Kokoshin wrote that understanding the relationship inherent in an “ideology-politics-military strategy” triangle helps untangle the seemingly irrational convictions, thoughts, and actions of individuals or groups.⁷ This triangle, when applied to Putin’s personality, becomes an interesting measuring tool for placing his actions in context.

Ideologically, Putin has constructed a new reality unlike any seen before in Russia, one designed not to persuade, but to cast enough doubt to make the truth a matter of opinion. The idea of “objective reality,” a Marxist concept through which one understands the world (and which the KGB taught Putin), has taken on a one-sided approach under Putin. Lilia Shevtsova, a Russian Kremlin expert, stated, “We can’t trust anything. Even with Soviet Propaganda, when they were talking with the Soviet people, there were some rules. Now, there are no rules at all. You can invent anything.”⁸ It is Putin’s or his propagandist’s “objective” or “new reality” to which Shevtsova is referring.

Putin is a believer in Russian Orthodoxy and, according to numerous first person Internet accounts (to include a YouTube video with Putin), was baptized in secret as a child. *Globe and Mail* reporter Mark MacKinnon, in a 2014 interview with Russian Tamara Leontieva in Yekaterinburg, wrote that Putin’s name comes from the church (with MacKinnon adding that the first syllable of Putin’s name, pronounced “poot” means the path or the way in Russian). He has helped reconstruct literally thousands of churches that were destroyed during the USSR era.⁹ Ironically, the church destruction orders sometimes emanated from the KGB, where Putin served during the USSR’s reign. He has resurrected the image of St. Sergius as the savior of Russia, thereby offering a replacement for St. Vladimir and Holy Rus. The latter are the most important religious links for Russians to Orthodoxy, but both were based in Ukraine. Severing these relations was a serious blow to Russia. The Russian Orthodox clergy believe St. Sergius will serve as an example of spiritual hope for Russians, since he embodies “what was and is the best in Russia” and “in many ways he is the source of Russia itself.”¹⁰

Putin’s actions, according to another *New York Times* editorial, are further influenced by several noted philosophers whose beliefs help Putin overcome feelings of humiliation, which many Russians have felt since the USSR’s disintegration. Ivan Ilyin (1883-1954), apparently Putin’s favorite, wrote that “we trust and are confident that the hour will come when Russia will rise from disintegration and humiliation and begin an epoch of new development and greatness,”¹¹ since Russia has a unique spiritual status, a devotion to Orthodoxy and belief in autocracy, and a purpose (Russian exceptionalism). Ilyin believed an anti-Christian virus was transferred to Russia from the West, introducing “materialism, irrationalism, and nihilism” and morally blinding mankind while breaking Russia’s bond with God.¹² Another favorite philosopher, Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948), defended Russia’s traditional values and cited the need to ward off moral chaos (emblemized for Putin, perhaps, by homosexuals and other activists who do not fit into his world view). A final favorite, Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), noted that Russia’s historic mission is to unify humanity due to its location between the Catholic West and non-Christian East.¹³

Politically, Putin is an opportunist of the first order. With regard to his actions in Crimea, Putin capitalized on the strong political hand he had been dealt (chaos in Kiev, German support, US budget woes and a tired military, etc.) and appeared to act out of instinct based on the



President Putin with Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Alexy II.

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Continued: Russian President Vladimir Putin: Zealot, Patriot, Or Threat?

objective reality before him. Putin, unlike Stalin, does not appear willing to take great losses, but he does seem to handle risk well, taking it when he has to. He keeps his options open and appears prone to “doubling down” in the face of accusations, as he has done after the MH-17 tragedy by continuing to arm the separatists. And he is not through in Ukraine, not by any means. As early as 1994 he said that Russia had voluntarily given up “huge territories” to the former USSR republics, including areas “which historically have always belonged to Russia.”¹⁴ He was thinking “not only about Crimea and northern Kazakhstan, but also for example about the Kaliningrad area.”¹⁵ Russia could not simply abandon to their own fate 25 million Russians now living in the former USSR republics.¹⁶ This claim ignores the fate of the non-Russians living there, however. His political goal is to recapture lost territory and make the world respect the interests of the Russian state and people as a great nation. Since Ukraine is the key element of Russian history, Putin will do all in his power to regain this territory.

Putin rules Russia’s political hierarchy. He appoints governors, sets difficult entry rules for new political parties, and has a pliable Duma that bends to his requests. Kokoshin notes that politics, like strategy, is a sphere of free creativity, of art. Putin has shown over the years that he is extremely creative, e.g., retooling the Russian constitution to ensure that he can be reelected and serve as Russia’s president into the next decade. Further, he remains indebted to the KGB and current security services. They are not only a guarantee of security, but also a political arm that can be relied upon to carry out his policies in covert ways. Anna Politkovskaya, a courageous Russian journalist who reported on the war in Chechnya and wrote on Putin, stated before her death (she was assassinated in the elevator to her apartment) that Putin “has failed to transcend his origins and stop acting like a lieutenant-colonel in the KGB. He is still busy sorting out his freedom-loving countrymen; he persists in crushing liberty, just as he did earlier in his career.”¹⁷

Military strategy, according to the formal Russian military definition, investigates the patterns, mechanisms, and nature of war, and the modes and methods of its conduct; and formulates the theoretical principles of planning, preparing, and conducting strategic operations and war as a whole.¹⁸ In addition to this understanding of the concept, many Russian military theorists continue to quote the historical work of Alexander Svechin on strategic thought. For example, current Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov quoted the famed strategist in the following way: “It is unusually difficult to foresee the circumstances of a war...it is necessary to work out a particular line of strategic conduct for each war, and each war represents a partial case, requiring the establishment of its own peculiar logic, and not the application of some sort of model.”¹⁹

Establishing or uncovering a particular logic involves the science of forecasting. This involves an analysis of the future strategic situation and the existing correlation of forces, which is a Russian military specialty. From this analysis strategy is formulated. Russia’s military activities under Putin appear to have followed this logic, as each military intervention has contained a different logic and approach. In Estonia it was a cyber attack. In Georgia it was a planned intervention, complete with military exercises on the border before the invasion began. In Crimea and Ukraine it has been the use of surrogates and fixed referendums, supplanted with an extensive domestic propaganda campaign that has been stridently anti-Western and anti-international institutions (NATO, UN, EU). There has been no standard model to follow, just the flexible application of strategy to fit the objective conditions.

Further, it is clear that in the information age Russia’s leaders consider “strategic ambiguity” as a key policy instrument, a vital aspect of the contemporary character of warfare and military strategy that is to be exploited. This could apply to specific military actions (for example, Russian counter-claims as to who shot down MH-17, based on Russia’s contamination of the crash site and the initial blockading of the investigators from the site, making it impossible to place blame)



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Continued: Russian President Vladimir Putin: Zealot, Patriot, Or Threat?

or the manipulation of strategic communications, to include the holding of fixed referendums in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine without international monitoring.

Conclusion

To understand Putin, then, requires the comprehension of many things, especially the context in which he is operating, as well as the ideology-politics-strategy triangle that helps frame his actions. Putin traveled a quick and anonymous path from being at the nexus of the bureaucrats and former KGB officials in St. Petersburg to becoming the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and president of Russia. This quick transformation, combined with his inherent feeling of humiliation and mistrust, could not but have swayed his appetite for power and influence.

Ideologically, he is a man of convictions, an Orthodox believer in the sanctity and uniqueness of Russia's destiny. He appears to detest many Western values and desires to undo what to him was the greatest geopolitical tragedy in the history of mankind (the dissolution of the USSR) and to restore Russia to its former status as a great power. What Putin fails to appreciate is that Russia still is a great power, with its vast energy resources and nuclear weapons, without the need to reacquire lost territory. Instead he should be focusing on protecting what he already has, those millions of kilometers east of the Urals.

Politically, Putin sets goals and accomplishes them with the use of covert and indirect actions. He is not tied to morality, but is an opportunist and strategist who fully utilizes ambiguity in his quest to accomplish a host of geopolitical goals, which include not only land grabs, but also energy resources, such as those in the Arctic, an area he has militarized despite his promises to the contrary.

Strategically, Putin works out plans on a case by case basis, refusing to be tied down to a specific model of military action. In so doing he keeps his opponents off balance and unable to prepare a rational response to his unpredictable (some say irrational) activities. When sanctions are applied against the nation, he constructs counter-sanctions to offset any potential advances of the West. When Russian oil taps were turned off by the West, he looked East and found Chinese markets for his products. He is a patriot to most Russians, while for many Westerners he has become the preeminent threat to European security. The recent sending of convoys into Ukraine without permission is a direct violation of not only Ukraine's sovereignty but also the Budapest Memorandum, which many seem to have forgotten after Crimea.²⁰

It is of little wonder, then, that Putin is labeled by some as a patriot or messianic zealot who works for the defense of his motherland and by others as a major threat to international security. Patriot, zealot, or threat—where one sits (in Ukraine, Donetsk, Moscow) and how one understands history shape one's interpretation of his aspirations. However, some Russians, such as Andrey Piontkovsky, a well-known Russian political writer and analyst who has described the Putin regime as "soft totalitarianism," believe his desire to reacquire land that was legally ceded to others is the most dangerous threat to EurAsia since the end of the Cold War. With members of Russia's military openly stating that the primary enemies of Russia are the US and NATO,²¹ after all of the cooperation and engagements between and among our nations in the past twenty years, it seems he has come to a valid conclusion.

Putin and Russian nationalists are still unwilling to acknowledge a most important fact: why most former members of the USSR and Warsaw Pact continue to hold Russia at arm's length (not counting, of course, the many ethnic Russians inside these lands who naturally like President Putin's policies). These nations do not like his heavy handed approach to international relations. Putin does not need more land. Rather, his regime needs to find better ways to improve relations and trust with its neighbors, who continue to fear Russia. Russia has much to offer neighboring countries (business, technology, energy, etc.) that, combined with an aggressive cooperation policy, could unite the region and put Europe and Russia on an upward economic spiral for decades.

Unfortunately, chances for the West and Putin to come together and make the situation better do not appear likely in the short term, especially since Russia continues to pressure first Ukraine and now Transdniestria and Kazakhstan through numerous troop rotations and actions on their borders. Its new-found wealth and one-sided propaganda machine, based on a serious misread of Western intentions, have transitioned the nation's leadership into an arrogant and mistrustful regime. Russian policy has resorted to the bullying and invasive techniques of its Soviet past, although doing so with more trickery ("polite green men," surrogates, unmonitored elections, etc.). This outdated methodology has no merit in the modern age and will be met with strong condemnation and enhanced political will from all of its neighbors.

Continued: Russian President Vladimir Putin: Zealot, Patriot, Or Threat?

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